DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 447 462 CS 014 162

AUTHOR	Telfer, Richard J., Ed.
TITLE	Finding Our Literacy Roots. Yearbook of the American Reading Forum, 1998. [Papers from the American Reading Forum Annual Conference, 1997].
INSTITUTION	American Reading Forum.
SPONS AGENCY	Wisconsin State Univ., Whitewater.
ISSN	ISSN-0895-3562
PUB DATE	1998-00-00
NOTE	246p.
AVAILABLE FROM	American Reading Forum Yearbook, University of Wisconsin--Whitewater, Whitewater, WI 53190 ($20).
PUB TYPE	Collected Works - Proceedings (021) -- Collected Works - Serials (022)
JOURNAL CIT	Yearbook of the American Reading Forum; v18 1998
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC10 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Bibliotherapy; Childrens Literature; Elementary Secondary Education; English Teachers; Higher Education; Internet; *Literacy; Phonics; *Thematic Approach; Whole Language Approach; Yearbooks
IDENTIFIERS	*American Reading Forum; Book Awards; Historical Background; Literacy as a Social Process; Media Literacy

ABSTRACT

The theme of the American Reading Forum's 1997 conference was "Finding Our Literacy Roots." Many papers in this proceedings address the theme directly, some emphasizing literacy roots and others the roots of literacy. Following the keynote session, "Phonics and Whole Word/Whole Language Controversies, 1948-1998: An Introductory History" (E. Jennifer Monaghan), papers in the proceedings are: "American Spelling Instruction: What History Tells Us" (Bob Schlagal and Woodrow Trathen); "Reaching Consensus on Standards for Adult Literacy Assessment: Finding Our Roots, Not Creating Ruts" (Eunice N. Askov); "1997 Contenders/Winners: Children's Book Awards in Five English-Speaking Countries" (Ira E. Aaron and Sylvia M. Hutchinson); "1997 Contenders/ Winners: Children's Book Awards in Five English-Speaking Countries: A Reaction and a Retrospective Appreciation for a Body of Work" (Nelly Hecker); "Finding Our Literacy Roots: Teachers' Storytelling Stories" (Reed R. Mottley and Richard Telfer); "Thinking about Learning: Progenitor and Progeny" (Marino C. Alvarez and Christopher M. Alvarez); "Like Father, Like Son" (Ray Wolpow); "A Literacy Root Begins with a Seed: Planting an Elementary Education/English for Speakers of Other Languages Teacher Preparation Program" (Valerie J. Bristor and Jane Brady Matanzo); "Urban College Developmental and High School English Teachers Working Together" (Chet Laine; Connie Robinson; Barbara Wallace); "Oral Language: The Roots of Writing in a College Developmental Classroom" (Michaeline Laine); "Student Perceptions of Literacy Gains from Internet Access and HTML Home Page Construction" (Ray Wolpow); "When Children Are Victims: Making the Case for Bibliotherapy" (Cindy Gillespie Hendricks and James E. Hendricks); "What Is a Concept of Literacy?" (Woodrow Trathen and Michael Dale); "Media Literacy: The Practice of Reading Popular Culture" (Donna Alvermann); "Defining Literacy: A Caution from a Critical Conscience" (Cheri Foster Triplett); "Literacy: A Socio-Cultural Perspective" (Gary Moorman and Woodrow Trathen); "Looking for Our Literacy Roots in All the

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Right Places" (Rick Erickson and Others); "Reaction to 'Looking for Our Literacy Roots in all the Right Places'" (Eunice N. Askov); and "Seeking Agreement in Literacy Beliefs" (Mona W. Matthews; Laurie Elish-Piper; Jerry L. Johns; Victoria Risko). Individual papers contain references. (NKA)

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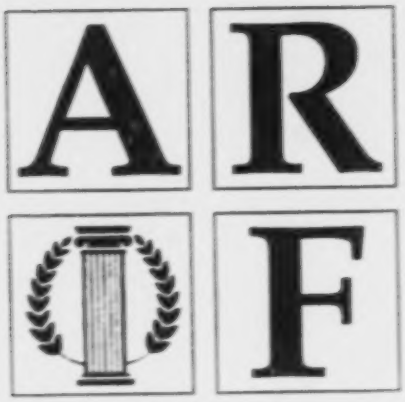

1998, VOLUME XVIII

Editor

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Publication made possible in part by support from
the University of Wisconsin-Whitewater

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ISBN 0895-3562

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Four copies of typewritten double-spaced manuscripts (approximately 5 to 20 pages) that follow current APA form should be submitted. Manuscripts and all correspondence should be sent to Dr. Richard J. Telfer, University of Wisconsin-Whitewater, Whitewater, Wisconsin 53190.

Subscriptions to the *American Reading Forum Yearbook* are $20 (U.S.) per year; back issues are $5. Checks should be made payable to the American Reading Forum. Subscription requests and all related correspondence should be sent to Richard J. Telfer, Editor, American Reading Forum Yearbook, University of Wisconsin-Whitewater, Whitewater, Wisconsin 53190.

(ISBN 0895-3562)

From The Editor

Volume XVIII of the *American Reading Forum Yearbook* contains papers that have been recommended by the Editorial Advisory Board from those submitted by authors who presented at the 1997 Annual Conference. The conference theme was *Finding Our Literacy Roots*. A significant number of the papers in this volume address this theme directly, some emphasizing literacy roots and others the roots of literacy. The diversity of the responses to the conference theme is striking. The 1998 *American Reading Forum Yearbook* offers its readers the opportunity to consider and reconsider literacy roots.

American Reading Forum

Volume XVIII, 1998

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Phonics and Whole Word/Whole Language Controversies, 1948-1998: An Introductory History

E. Jennifer Monaghan

From the mid teens of the twentieth century until his premature death in 1960, William S. Gray towered above his colleagues in the reading profession in reputation and influence. A key figure in the incorporation of the whole word methodology into reading textbooks, he was already, by 1955—the year that Rudolf Flesch published *Why Johnny Can't Read*—the author of 480 scholarly publications and senior author of Scott Foresman's best-selling *Basic Readers* (Gray, 1985). Seven years earlier, in 1948, Gray had published a book titled *On Their Own in Reading*. His own approach to reading instruction may be summarized by his three rhetorical questions, to which we may supply the answers. "Shall we, in response to public demand" (an interesting comment in itself on public perceptions about phonics as early as 1948) "reinstate the old mechanical phonic drills and content that inevitably result in dull, word-by-word reading?" [NO!] "Shall we go back to the 'guessing from context' that was emphasized in the thirties?" [NO!] "Or shall we develop word-perception skills that are functional in the total reading act?" [YES!] (Gray, 1948, p. 28).[1]

Gray proceeded to present the five approaches to word attack that were enshrined in what Jeanne Chall would later call the "conventional wisdom" (Chall, 1967). Gray's "five major aides to the perception of words in reading" are: first, meaning clues from the context; second, the form or appearance of a word (usually called configuration clues); third, structural clues (roots, prefixes, suffixes); fourth, "phonetic" clues (phonic clues); and fifth, the dictionary (Gray, 1948, pp. 40-41).

These were all to be used, of course, as adjuncts to the prevailing whole word, or "look-and-say" approach.

But in 1955, as you all know, Rudolf Flesch published his searing attack on the reading profession. It is always known by the first half of its title as *Why Johnny Can't Read*, but the rest of the title was just as inflammatory, because it removed reading instruction from the hands of the reading experts and restored it to parents: *And What You Can Do About It*. In his attack on the whole word approach, Flesch charged the reading experts with treating English as if it were Chinese, instead of the alphabetic system it is, and he claimed that the reading profession had ignored its own research and deliberately "concealed" the "true facts" from the public (Flesch, 1955, p.61). He vilified the list of word attack approaches described by David Russell (1949), which deviated from Gray's mainly by having configuration clues in first place and phonetic and structural ones in the last. He sneered at the "analytic phonics" that the reading profession was advocating.

The effect of Flesch's publication upon the public was remarkable. Parents, long frustrated over the current system, devoured *Why Johnny Can't Read*. The book was on the bestseller list for over thirty weeks. It sold 99,000 hardcover copies upon its first appearance and its total sales topped over half a million copies (Monaghan & Saul, 1987, p. 106). The reception *of Why Johnny Can't Read* by the reading community was another matter. The members of the reading profession circled the wagons in defense of their respected colleagues, whose scholarship had been attacked and whose motives had been impugned.

In reaction to Flesch's book, the reading establishment remained profoundly antagonistic towards systematic phonics and any reading programs based solely on such an approach. Many of you may be too young to remember the effect on the classroom teacher of the prohibition against what was called, pejoratively, "isolating the sounds of the letters." In the American classroom of the late 1950s and early 1960s, teaching sounds in isolation, the "kuh-a-tuh, cat" approach, became absolutely taboo. The profession was quick to explain why: it was dull drill that distracted the child completely from the meaning of what she read; and there was also such huge variability in the sounds represented by a given letter that teaching letters as sounds was impracticable even if it had been advisable, which of course it wasn't. Vowels were particularly hopeless: "to teach the child to speak a particular sound for a particular vowel is at all times inadvisable," as a textbook titled *Fundamentals of Basic Reading Instruction* put it as late as 1973 (Bamman, Dawson & McGovern, 1973, p. 142).

The reading profession said, to a man and woman, that teachers should use an eclectic approach, because using one method to the exclusion of all other methods could do "real damage" to the child (Bamman, Dawson & McGovern, 1973, p. 142). Even those reading professionals who now discussed phonics openly, as Dolores Durkin, Arthur Heilman, and Anna Cordts did in 1962, 1964, and 1965, respectively, opposed systematic phonics. Cordts, for instance, was unalterably opposed to "sounding out." "It has long been known," she opined, "that sounding out a word is not only a boresome [sic] and laborious task but it is incompatible with comprehension in reading" (Cordts, 1965, p. 14). Instead, the call was for a "Balanced Reading Program," as Lillian Gray put it in her *Teaching Children to Read*—one that would be free from the "Rugged Phonics Excess" of the 1870-1917 period, the following "Look-and-Say Excess," and the subsequent "Silent-Reading Excess" (L. Gray, 1963, pp. 50-53).

In 1967, again as you all know, Jeanne Chall published her *Learning to Read: The Great Debate*. The key difference between Flesch and Chall was not just one of tone: Chall was an admired member of the professional reading community. In a careful and highly readable analysis, and in measured and temperate prose, she reported the results of her own research into the "Great Debate": that indeed the research, of poor quality as it undoubtedly was, suggested not only that a change to a code-emphasis approach would produce superior results, but that "systematic" phonics was more effective than the "analytic" phonics of the conventional wisdom. Publishers of basal reading programs, she said, could "play a major role" in effecting this change by fine-tuning their programs (Chall, 1967, p. 309).

What were the consequences of Chall's rehabilitation of systematic phonics? Her most lasting contribution was that it eventually became respectable, even among members of the reading profession, to suggest that M "said" "mmm" and even that B "said" "buh." Dolores Durkin, author of the best-known book on phonics, now conceded, in a book titled *Teaching Young Children to Read*, that there was "a need for some children to isolate sounds" (Durkin, 1972, p. 351). A few texts for teachers identified the contents of phonics instruction in some detail, even though they retained the earlier elements of the conventional wisdom, such as configuration clues (e.g., Bush & Huebner, 1970; Fitzgerald & Fitzgerald, 1967).

It would also be true to say that Chall's work gave a boost to those publishers who were already publishing what they called phonic or linguistic series, such as Merrill's *Linguistic Readers*, *Lippincott's Basic Reading* series—which excited much interest because Chall had used sample pages from the series as illustrations for The Great Debate—

and the *Open Court* series. (Blouke Carus, the founder of the *Open Court* series, said that before Chall's book came out he had had to drag people in from the aisles at International Reading Association conventions to look at his booth; after it, teachers inquired spontaneously. *Open Court* ended up giving presentations to 150,000 teachers all over the country.)[2] In short, Chall's book changed teachers' attitudes toward phonics, particularly toward explicit/systematic phonics.

Chall's book did not, however, result in a profound change in the traditional basal reading series: basal readers designed along systematic phonic lines were, and continue to be, in a tiny minority.[3] Most publishers of the traditional basals simply added supplementary phonics lessons to their traditional look-and-say plus "conventional wisdom" readers. Chall's own conclusion as to the effect of her book, voiced thirteen years later in a 1983 update, was that "basal readers teach more phonics and they teach it earlier than in 1967" (Chall, 1983, p. 37).

The great problem with phonics lessons as supplements was, and still remains, that the phonic elements are unrelated—or at best only marginally related—to anything the child is actually reading, whether in the readers or in anything else. Charles Walcutt, coauthor of the systematic phonics program *Lippincott's Basic Reading*, summarized the problems with supplemental phonics programs this way: "In these programs phonics is isolated from the act of reading; it involves drills for practice of its several principles; it is meaningless because these principles, although occasionally applied to words that are sometimes anchored in sentences, are seldom extended to the wider act of reading a paragraph or story" (Walcutt, Lamport & McCracken, 1974, p. 156).

On the other hand, a similar criticism of meaninglessness can always be charged to the initial lessons of the phonic/linguistic approaches, in that it is almost impossible to write meaningful prose if you have to restrict your choice of words to those that exhibit the phonetic element that your instruction has reached by that point. The most extreme examples are in the Merrill *Linguistic Readers*, "Dad had pins in bins. He had a pin for the fan. He had to tap the pin into the fan" (thus running a serious risk of electrocution) (reproduced in Walcutt, Lamport & McCracken, 1974, p. 165). But you can certainly make the same statement about the initial "stories" in the Lippincott series itself: "Run, rat, run. Run, run, run. Run to a red sun...Run, run, run" (McCracken & Walcutt, 1969, p. 17). The fact is that all beginning materials based on some kind of vocabulary or phonic control will sound stilted to a greater or lesser degree at the beginning levels. The important question, however, is not whether this bothers the teacher (which it often does), but whether it disturbs the child.

The Whole Language Movement, 1980 On

Implicit in my discussion so far is the underlying assumption that no matter what approach basal readers take, it is they that are the purveyors of reading instruction for American children. Whenever the Great Debate was discussed, the answer was always couched in terms of what should, or should not, be included in a basal reading series. In the early 1980s, however, an attack was launched on the very concept of basal reading instruction. Patrick Shannon, in a series of studies and analyses of the relationships among publishers, textbook selection committees, reading experts, teachers and texts, used the constructs of sociological theory to evaluate American reading instruction (Shannon, 1983, 1989). One of the features identified by Shannon was the "rationalization" of the reading program into a series of sequenced skills and subskills. Another was "alienation," in which the compulsory use of basal series distances teachers both subjectively and objectively from their craft, "deskilling" them in the process (Shannon, 1989, p. 78).

The response that Shannon and others advocate in order to dismantle the "rationalization" of reading instruction is, of course, the whole language movement (Shannon, 1989, 1990), one of whose major themes is that basal reading series should be discarded and that children should learn to read from "real" books—children's fiction and nonfiction. Key leaders in this movement have been Kenneth and Yetta Goodman along with Donald Graves and his colleagues; together, they have had a major effect upon the integration of writing and reading within the first-grade classroom.

Almost from the start, the whole language movement won wholehearted support from thousands of teachers. Indeed, one of its most intriguing aspects has been its growth at the grass-roots level. Teachers formed teacher cooperatives, founded the Whole Language Umbrella (an organization that is dedicated to encouraging networking and research into whole language), and prepared books and guidelines for converts.

The reason for the appeal of the whole language philosophy to teachers, against the current of basal reading instruction, is not far to seek. Teachers consider whole language empowering (e.g., Rich, 1985). They believe that it restores them to their professionalism instead of reducing them to the role of executives of the mandates of a basal reading series. It is now the *teachers'* knowledge about children and language acquisition that is crucial to a class's success, not the scope and sequence dictated by whoever it is who decides upon what goes into or stays out of the basal reader.

Whole Language Theories

It is important, however, to examine the theories behind the whole language movement. (1) Reading, according to whole language proponents, involves multiple cue systems, semantic and syntactic as well as graphophonemic; successful word identification depends upon the simultaneous use of all these systems (Goodman, 1968). Readers do not actually see the print that they think they see, according to Frank Smith (1973), so the orthographic element is of minor importance. Reading is therefore held to be, in Goodman's classic phrase, a "psycholinguistic guessing game" (Goodman, 1967).

(2) Both learning to read and learning to write are believed to be like learning to listen and speak, and will therefore be accomplished naturally by exposure to a rich and supportive literacy environment. Children will spell more conventionally when they wish to communicate more effectively (Graves & Stuart, 1985). Indeed, "natural" is one of the movement's key metaphors (Moorman, Blanton & McLaughlin, 1994). Both assumptions, however, have come under attack, particularly by linguists (e.g., Liberman & Liberman, 1992).

These theories have had profound consequences upon the teaching of literacy: each in its own way has led proponents of whole language to downgrade the importance of phonics and spelling instruction. Kenneth Goodman has put it as follows: we used, he said, "to think we facilitated learning to read by breaking written language into bite-size pieces for learners. Instead, we turned it from easy-to-learn language into hard-to learn abstractions" (Goodman, 1976, p. 12). As a result, instruction in more than a few letter-sound correspondences (mainly consonants) is largely discredited among the majority of those who *write* about whole language (as opposed, in many cases, to those who actually use it in the classroom). Moreover, direct instruction in individual phonic elements is frowned upon: "Learning to make sense of print in reading or express sense in writing," as Goodman wrote in 1992, "does not require learning letter-sound relationships in isolation" (Goodman, 1992, p. 60).

The small role to be played by phonics instruction within the whole language movement can be seen in a couple of examples of how these theories are translated into practice. Both are found in professional publications designed to help whole language teachers and published by the International Reading Association (IRA) or the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE).

The first is taken from one of IRA's many publications on whole language, a book edited by Shirley Raines titled *Whole Language Across the Curriculum* (1995). None of the terms "word recognition," "word attack," or "phonics" is listed in the index. My example comes from Shirley Raines's own contribution, "A First Grade Teacher Becomes a Whole Language Teacher." Terri, the exemplary first-grade teacher modeling whole language teaching, is tackling word recognition and has already taught the children a cloze strategy for identifying unknown words. Now she turns to the strategy of using initial consonants. In reading *Frog and Toad are Friends* (Lobel, 1970), a child is trying to decode the word *porch*, which he has skipped the first time he read it. The teacher now reads aloud to him, "'Frog and Toad sat on the 'blank,' feeling sad together.' The child looks at the picture and says, 'stoop.' Then he says, 'No it can't be stoop, it doesn't start with 's'; it's a 'p'." The teacher then reads the sentence again, and the child says "porch" (Raines, 1995, p. 29). My simple question is, why hasn't this child already been taught that O R is the eminently consistent spelling for the sound /ôr/, and /č/ the first choice for C H, so that he can decipher "porch" on his own, and use his syntactic and semantic skills to verify that the pronunciation he has come up with matches a word in his speaking vocabulary, rather than trusting to context and an initial consonant to supply the word? What happens if there is no picture? And how can he ever pronounce a word that is not already in his speaking vocabulary?

My second example focuses on invented spelling and comes from an NCTE publication. It was, until the IRA's publication of Dorothy Strickland's booklet on phonics in 1998, the only one I have been able to find published by either the IRA or NCTE that devoted a whole publication to the place of phonics in a whole language program (or in any other kind of program, for that matter). It is called *Looking Closely: Exploring the Role of Phonics in One Whole Language Classroom* (Mills, O'Keefe and Stephens, 1992). In one of its chapters, the authors trace the development over the course of the school year of three children in this at-risk first-grade classroom. Jessica began her invented spelling in September with random letters. By the end of first grade, Jessica had certainly learned to treat writing as meaningful communication, which is a tribute to her teacher. Her last piece of writing, composed in May, reads in part, after she has written that she is seven: "my frd is spid the nit. wei mad a plnt!" (Mills, et al., 1992, p. 43).

My simple question is, given that Jessica has an excellent ability to segment phonemes and represents *night* and *made* with great accuracy in terms of her own orthography by using the appropriate vowels, why hasn't she been taught, after a whole year, some generalizations,

such as the silent-final-e rule, so that she can spell more consistently in standard spelling? (Children were being taught this rule in 1596—*"he is made mad"* [Coote, 1596, p. 15; Hart, 1963, p. 147]). The rule would cover *made* and many other words she uses, and the teacher should choose how to present the *igh* of *night* to her—whether as "a three-letter *i*" (Spalding & Spalding, 1957/1990), as the rime *ight*, or as an exception. In fact, in this classroom the *children* were more interested in *teaching* spelling than their own teacher: a group of them put rhyming words on the board, like *he*, *see*, *we*, and *me*, and explained them to their peers!

Many parents have reacted angrily to spelling performances of this kind. Ethel Buchanan, a Canadian whole language advocate who has published on spelling and believes that it is important for the child to master conventional spelling, has identified the potentially damaging consequences for the whole language approach. As she puts it, "I believe that if anything is going to defeat the whole language movement, it will be the way we handle spelling" (Buchanan, 1994, p. 181). Parents value correct spelling, and what is charmingly idiosyncratic in a four-year-old seems no longer to be so in a seven-year-old.

Teacher training

But, in my view, there have also been other factors at work that have exacerbated this situation. There are at least six factors that have contributed, historically, to teachers' distrust of the value of knowing about the phonology and orthography of English and to their reluctance to communicate this knowledge directly to children. They are, not necessarily in order of importance, first, a disrespect for history; second, the lingering effects of the professional backlash against *Why Johnny Can't Read*; third, a division in turf between the reading professionals and the learning disabilities specialists, which is directly related to the legislation of, and funding provided by, federal and state governments since the passage of the law for children with disabilities (Public Law 94-142); fourth, an ironic consequence of tossing the basal reading series out of the whole language classroom, and with it one of the last sources of detailed information on phonics; fifth, the split between practitioners in the classroom and researchers into the reading process; and sixth, the failure of teacher training programs to inform teachers about orthography and phonology (Monaghan, 1997). Of these, I shall talk in any depth only about the last.

Long before the advent of the whole language movement, precise information about phonics had already been excluded from the vast majority of books written on how to teach reading—but for different reasons, depending on the date of the three relevant periods: (1) pre-

Flesch (1917-1955); (2) post-Flesch but pre-Chall (1956-1966); and (3) post-Chall (after 1967). If you will bear with me, a little review of books designed to help teachers teach reading is in order.

In the pre-Flesch era, authors of handbooks for teachers talked very little about the nitty-gritty of phonics, because, as we know, it ranked so low on the list of word attack skills. However, precise phonic information was available in works on reading remediation—where phonics was regarded as a useful tool—such as Edward Dolch's *A Manual for Remedial Reading* (1945), or Donald Durrell's *Improvement of Basic Reading Abilities* (1940), or Samuel *Kirk's Teaching Reading to Slow-Learning Children* (1940).

In the interlude between Flesch and Chall, the first professional reaction, as I mentioned earlier, was to blast explicit phonics. But, as passions subsided with the passage of time, a couple of professionals wrote books that focused directly on the topic of phonics, such as Dolores Durkin's *Phonics and the Teaching of Reading* (1962/1965) or Anna Cordts' *Phonics for the Reading Teacher* (1965); both of them gave considerable information on phonics within the context of intrinsic/analytic phonics—of phonic insights gleaned from sight words. There were also books authored by scholars outside the reading profession, who were attacking the sight approach to reading instruction and who valued letter-sound correspondences—people like Emerald DeChant, who wrote a book in 1964 called *Improving the Teaching of Reading*.

In the post-Chall era, one would have expected an increase in discussions of phonics in books for teachers. However, most writers for teachers in the 1970s still did not specify the content of phonics instruction in any detail. Instead, they routinely referred teachers to basal reading series, which they could now do because, thanks to Chall, the basal readers had begun to include more discussion of phonics, albeit in bits and pieces and in a disorganized way. Authors of handbooks for teachers, who were, of course, often authors of basal readers themselves, knew that teachers would find there, right in their own classrooms, information on the nitty-gritties of beginning consonant blends, silent final e's and so on and so forth. As the authors of *Fundamentals of Basic Reading Instruction* put it in 1973, "a very good guide to the scope and sequence of word-attack skills is the teacher's manual for most basal reading series" (Bamman, Dawson, & McGovern, 1973, p. 132).

Several books on phonics for teachers stemmed from the behaviorist movement of the 1970s—from skills-based instruction, where it was believed that reading could be learned by having its presumed

components broken up into small pieces in all areas of instruction (comprehension and study skills, as well as decoding) and be taught and tested to "criterion." One offshoot of this was programmed reading instruction, and the publications of the 1980s saw a few such texts on phonics for teachers. The most enduring of these has been Marion Hull's *Phonics for the Teacher of Reading*, which was in its fifth edition by 1989. (It should not be considered a product of Chall's *Great Debate* because it first appeared in mimeograph form in 1966.)

Just how out of favor phonics was becoming once again, however, as the whole language movement got under full swing in the early 1980s, may be seen from a couple of other programmed texts designed to teach phonics to teachers: they are not typeset but appear as reproductions of typescripts (Logan, 1985; Rogers & Palardy, 1985)! Another text of the same period, a primer called *Prescription for Reading: Teach Them Phonics*, was authored by an optometrist enraged by parents who brought him children who couldn't read, but who had perfect eyesight, for eyetests. Illustrated by his daughter, it too was published from a typescript (Christman, 1983). Another, subtitled Plugging a Hole in Whole Language, was authored by an advocate of whole language, Thomas Cloer, after he had looked in vain for what he needed (Cloer, 1980/1993). These are hardly texts of the educational mainstream.

From 1990 to about 1995, there was a continuing dearth of easily-accessible texts that explained phonics to teachers. In 1991 Pat Cunningham published her *Phonics They Use* (1991/1995), but it depends heavily upon children's remembering chunks of old words in order to decode new ones by consonant substitution, and so should be classified as an intrinsic phonics approach. Kenneth Goodman's *Phonic Phacts* (1993) did discuss letter-sound correspondences, but the work as a whole does not deviate from his earlier philosophy. One text published in the early 1990s that both covered the content of phonics and showed how to teach it illustrates once again how completely phonics had slipped outside the mainstream of contemporary reading instruction: Phyllis Fischer's *The Sounds and Spelling Patterns of English: Phonics for Teachers and Parents* (1993) was published by herself. "Missing from the current literature," she explains in her preface, "is an overview of the structure of our written words that provides readers with an understanding of how the sounds of English are paired with the spelling patterns" (Fischer, 1993, p. v). The year 1995, however, saw significant changes in some quarters; these are discussed below.

Another reason for the lack of teacher preparation in phonics is that, not only are there merely a handful of publications out there on phonology and orthography, but there are also few courses that discuss them adequately in teacher-training institutions. (If there

were, there would undoubtedly be more texts published.) A factor in this has unquestionably been the adoption of the whole language philosophy by so many teacher-trainers. As Regie Routman, a wholehearted advocate of whole language, has noted, "Many of those coming out of our universities say that they have the big picture, that they know about literature and response, but they don't have a clue about how to actually teach reading—the phonics, the strategies, the cueing systems. Several of them have told me that phonics was barely mentioned in their courses" (Routman, 1996, p. 103).

When those who train teachers do think that informing prospective teachers about the phonology and orthography of their own language is important, the results are instructive. In 1995 Louisa Moats surveyed 89 teachers for their linguistic and orthographic knowledge. The teachers averaged five years of teaching experience among them. She found that only 30 percent of them could explain when one used the letters *ck* in spelling; only a quarter of them knew that there were three phonemes, not two, in ox; and that virtually none of them could consistently identify consonant digraphs. When she taught them about the phonology and orthography of English, 85 to 93 percent of each of her classes rated their new linguistic knowledge as either "highly useful" or "essential" in their teaching, no matter what subject they taught (Moats, 1995).

So a conjunction of forces, including a theoretical stance that has consistently downgraded the importance of letter-sound relationships, has combined to deprive teachers of important knowledge about the phonological and orthographical features of their own language. In other words, this has led to the "deskilling" of teachers, to adapt a Patrick Shannon term, in the whole language classroom. Teachers today, especially the younger ones, probably know less about the phonology and orthography of their own language than at any other time in the long and honorable history of American reading instruction. Moreover, not only do teachers not know about orthography, but they often don't want to know. And why should they? They have been informed that the theoretical underpinnings of whole language do not require them to know it.

But even those who do now proclaim that phonics matters downgrade the importance of knowing specific information about letter-sound correspondences. Instead, they emphasize the standard decoding strategies of the 1930s, 1940s and 1950s: guessing from the context and initial consonants. This, for instance, is Regie Routman's 1996 advice on how to attack unfamiliar words.

Reading Strategies for Unknown Words

- Skip the difficult word.
  Read on to end of sentence or paragraph.
  Go back to the beginning of sentence and try again.
- Read on.
  Reread inserting the beginning sound of the unknown word.
- Substitute a word that makes sense.
- Look for a known chunk or small word.
  Use finger to cover part of word.
- Read the word using only beginning and ending sounds.
  Read the word without the vowels.
- Look at the picture cues.
- Link to prior knowledge.
- Predict and anticipate what could come next.
- Cross check.
  "Does it sound right?"
  "Does it make sense?"
  "Does it look right?"
- Self-correct and self-monitor.
- Write words you can't figure out and need to know on Post-its.
- Read passage several times for fluency and meaning.

Use errors as an opportunity to problem solve.

By Regie Routman (p. 198)

Almost all the features of what Chall called the "conventional wisdom" are enshrined in this advice. There are context cues/clues, structural clues ("a known chunk"), and picture clues. The only piece missing from William S. Gray's 1948 list of clues, discussed earlier, is configuration clues. Phonic clues embrace only beginning and ending consonants. Vowels are explicitly excluded as a source of decoding insight. It is the conventional wisdom revivified and reincarnated in its whole language dress.

Public Perceptions

Perhaps none of this would particularly matter if the public perceived whole language instruction to be working. But many parents have been dismayed to discover that their children have not learned to read. To buttress this perception, they can now point, rightly or wrongly, to the test results of California children. California led the country in 1987 in adopting a literature-based elementary curriculum. No other state threw itself so wholeheartedly into whole language and literature-based instruction. But by 1994 its fourth-grade proficiency scores had slid almost to the bottom of the 41 states and territories that participated in the 1994 National Assessment of Education Progress (Campbell, Donahue, Reese, & Phillips, 1996). In fairness, it should be pointed out that at the same time California was experiencing massive cuts in school funding. This, however, was not what parents blamed for the decline. (For a contrary position, see McQuillan, 1998, pp. 12-14.)

Just as they did in the 1950s, parents have once again blamed the schools for not teaching phonics. And not just any old phonics—they have complained about the lack of precisely the "kuh-a-tuh, cat" kind of phonics that Flesch had advocated—systematic, explicit instruction in letter-sound correspondences along with blending, as opposed to the "embedded" and minimalist phonics of whole language. Moreover, thanks to the philosophical position taken by whole language advocates, the debate is invariably couched in a "whole language" versus "phonics" format, as if the two, in the public mind, were totally incompatible. When members of the whole language community respond that of course they teach phonics, parents do not believe them.

Parents have gone to remarkable lengths to restore explicit phonics instruction to the schools: they have sought redress, as they see it, from their state legislatures. Bills have been introduced mandating the use of phonics in Alabama, California, Mississippi, Missouri, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, South Carolina, Texas, and Wisconsin. Of these, many have been either defeated or shelved, but in Alabama, California and Ohio the legislation has become state law. California's law, for one, is very specific about the kind of phonics it wants: the "fundamental skills of all subject areas," it says, are to be included in the curriculum, "including, but not limited to, systematic, explicit phonics, spelling, and basic computational skills." The section with these provisions was added to the existing Education Code and signed into law in October 1995 as an "emergency statute." Its status as an emergency was supported by citing the "poor performance of pupils who took the California Learning Assessment System (CLAS) and the National Assessment of Education Progress tests" (1995 Cal ALS 765).[4]

The American press, of course, has become interested in the furor, and magazines and newspapers alike invariably depict it as a phonics versus whole language issue and make accurate distinctions between the kind of phonics parents mean and the kind practiced in the whole language movement. A front-page article in the *Los Angeles Times* in December 1996 characterized the phonics taught within whole language as teaching children to "rely heavily on pictures to figure out the words. They are encouraged to notice the first and last letters of words and to guess at those they cannot figure out" (Duff, 1996). Other papers remark on the ideological leanings of the participants and note that phonics, like politics, makes strange bedfellows. This headline appeared on the front page of the *Wall Street Journal* in October 1996: "*ABCeething*/ How Whole Language/ Became a Hot Potato/ In and Out of Academia/ Reading Method Ditched/ Phonics, Won Adherents/ But Test Scores Tanked/ A Boomer-Christian Coalition" (Duff, 1996).

The Canadian press is also having a good time with the corresponding fuss in Canada, which embraced whole language warmly in the 1980s. Whereas in 1988 Canada was being hailed as "A leader in whole-language instruction" (McCaughy, 1988), by 1993 the Canadian magazine *Maclean's* was featuring articles on whole language and phonics titled, guess what, "The reading debate" (Young, 1993), and by the fall of 1995 the Canadian magazine *Saturday Night* was running one titled "Why schools can't teach," with the subhead, "Phonetics replaced by whole language learning in Canada" (Nikiforuk & Howes, 1995). In Canada, in fact, the situation is viewed by some as even more dire than in the United States. The results of the 1994 reading tests for fourth-graders in the province of British Columbia, where whole language had been the prevailing approach, were so awful that they were never released: there were so many scores that had to be disqualified—incomplete tests or scores below 25 percent—that there were not enough left for an adequate database (Nikiforuk & Howes, 1995).

Publishers have also, of course, pricked up their ears. There has been a spate of programs, often including audiotapes and video-tapes, that purport to teach phonics. *Hooked on Phonics*, for instance, started up in 1987 with a modest budget of $150,000. By 1993 it was making $110 million a year—until the Federal Trade Commission caught up with it and made it sign a consent decree admitting it had been running unsubstantiated advertising (Darlin, 1996). The point is not whether *Hooked on Phonics* delivered what it promised (it presumably didn't), but why on earth two million people should spend some $250 each to purchase it, when they were already spending their hard-earned tax dollars on having their children taught to read in the public schools.

There is an added twist to all this, and that is its ideological aspect. The most vocal supporters of systematic phonics are often those of the most politically conservative slant. From Robert Dole on down (Dole made his contempt for whole language part of his presidential campaign in 1996), conservatives have advocated, advertised and fought for the restoration of phonics to the curriculum. The work of the Virginia-based, conservative National Right to Read Foundation is well-known in this regard as a focus of pro-phonics activism.

But, as the *Wall Street Journal*'s headline of "[Baby] Boomer-Christian Coalition" suggested, by no means all those who advocate phonics happen to be conservatives. Because, however, the conservatives have a tendency to talk louder than other groups, an ideological split has emerged that has already become a stereotype: on the liberal/conservative continuum, whole language is of course placed in the liberal camp, while explicit phonics is regarded as the prized possession of the conservatives.

The net result is that when whole language advocates feel themselves to be under seige, they are quick to seize upon the ideological divide to attack those who suggest they should be doing something different (see Foorman, 1995). There is still, just as there was in Flesch's heyday, an emotional response to the very word "phonics." In 1985, when *Becoming a Nation of Readers* was published, one of its recommendations was that teachers should present "well-designed phonics instruction" that presents the letters and their sounds both in isolation and in context, along with sounding out and blending (Anderson, Hiebert, Scott, & Wilkinson, 1985, p. 118). As whole language proponents reacted to the book, they castigated it for its focus on phonics and its lack of attention to meaning. When NCTE decided to act as one of the book's distributors, it did so only after much heart-searching. Whole language advocates noted how successful the book had been politically, winning "the enthusiastic acceptance of the Far Right" (Davidson, 1988, p. 107). Similarly, Marilyn Adams's important summary of research on basic reading processes (1990), which led her to conclude that reading was emphatically not a "psycholinguistic guessing game," was greeted derisively by some whole language supporters as a return to "a simple machine-like technology" (Flurkey & Meyer, 1994, p. 12).

The charges leveled by some on the other side are even more inflammatory: one writer for the National Right to Read Foundation, for instance, delights in vocabulary like "edu-babble" and "phony phonics," invokes the mantle of Rudolf Flesch, and encourages parents to whip their children out of the public school if they are displeased with what is going on there (Elam, 1996).

Conclusion and Recommendations

We have come to a pretty pass when laypersons feel so strongly about the inadequacies of current philosophies of reading instruction that they resort to legislation. None of us should rejoice at this turn of events.

But are their concerns justified? What are we to make of the findings of a recent study that explored what some 1,200 classroom teachers thought about how to teach reading? The study's major conclusion was that "A majority of teachers embraced a balanced, eclectic approach to elementary reading instruction, blending phonics and holistic principles and practices" (Baumann, Hoffman, Moon, & Duffy-Hester, 1998, p. 611). This finding seems to contradict all the evidence I have presented above.

Have both the public and the press distorted what good teachers do, at a time when teachers have resolved the "Great Debate" for themselves pragmatically? The answer may be "yes" and "no." Good teachers have always drawn what they liked from a given approach and disregarded the rest, and it certainly rings true that pragmatism has won out over dogmatism. But that is not the same as saying that the debate has been futile. Even on the admission of some of the most ardent advocates of whole language, new teachers have been inadequately prepared to teach phonics (on Regie Routman's evidence), and parents have legitimate concerns over spelling (according to Ethel Buchanan). It was parents, remember, who revolted against the current situation, not the press; the press has simply been having a field day ever since.

I therefore think that we may draw three conclusions and one major recommendation from the history of what has happened. The first is that there is still a yawning gulf between proponents of explicit phonics and the kind of phonics advocated by champions of whole language. The latter group does not believe that phonics is a major key to decoding, and therefore does not teach children much phonics. In this, there has been no shift in sentiment over the last 50 years, ever since Gray's five principles of word attack. Should we or should we not, as well as teaching a child that the letter P "says" "puh" (on which there is now almost universal agreement), also teach him the digraphs and vowel combinations of the written language, so that a child can decode a word like *porch* himself instead of guessing it from the context and its initial consonant? There remains a genuine area of disagreement and broad misunderstanding between the two sides on this issue.

I myself feel that we have a moral and intellectual obligation to provide children with more phonic information than is common in most of the classrooms of today. It is nonsense, for instance, to think that children cannot and should not be taught at least the most important of the final silent -e rules, the "magic-e" one that indicates the "long" pronunciation of the vowel. Children have mastered that rule for centuries: recall the *"he is made mad"* of Edmund Coote in 1596. Children like explanations.

My second conclusion is that the great divide between whole language and explicit phonics instruction, as it is perceived by the public and the press, is one of the reading profession's (as opposed to classroom teachers') own making. It does not have to be that way: it is not an either/or choice, as the respondents to Baumann et al.'s study made clear (1998). It is perfectly possible—but only if one teaches a child *enough* about letter-sound-correspondences (LSCs)—to do both at the same time. Indeed, instruction in a large number of LSCs is potentially the quickest route to helping a child read naturalistic texts. A friend of mine who teaches in our local Brooklyn public school runs through the 72 Spalding phonograms each morning for ten minutes before devoting the rest of her first graders' schoolday to a completely whole language approach to which she is totally dedicated (Spalding & Spalding, 1957/1990).

The failure of so many practitioners to teach much phonics has landed the profession in yet another battle—over so-called "decodable" texts. Should we offer children only texts that exhibit the LSCs taught up to that point? (The Dad who "had to tap the pin in the fan," you will recall, was an example of these.) The systematic-phonics *Open Court* readers are currently one of few contemporary exemplars of such "decodable" texts. Their rationale is that one cannot teach everything at once, and that children need step-by-step mastery. Again, that this should prove to be a dilemma is a product of the reading profession's own making, because it has recommended teaching so few LSCs and so late. Almost any text is potentially decodable if one teaches the child enough about spelling patterns.

My third point, therefore, is both a conclusion and a recommendation: change will only occur when teachers themselves come to appreciate the complexity and, dare I say, beauty, of the English sound-spelling/spelling-sound system. For this, we must alter how we prepare teachers along the lines suggested by Louisa Moats (Moats, 1995). Teachers need to know much more than they currently do about phonology and orthography—about their own speech system, and how the writing system works. New courses will be neces-

sary. One of the unintended consequences of the integration of reading and writing in the elementary school—for the first time in the history of American literacy instruction—has been the halving of the time devoted to teaching teachers how to teach reading and writing. In the new climate, what were formerly two courses (one each in reading and writing) have been combined at most teacher education institutions into one, leaving prospective teachers with a mere three-hour course in which to master the foundations of all other instruction.

New books will be also be needed. It is a measure of how much professional opinion has shifted since the passage of the California law in 1995 that some promising titles are already in print (e.g., Eldredge, 1995; Fox, 1996). For those whole language adherents who balk at "dreary rule talk," as Lyn Wendon calls it (Wendon, 1990, p. 4), Wendon claims that her program, first published in England, avoids the dreariness by translating letters into pictorial metaphors, and rules into stories about the letter characters (Wendon 1987-1994). There are now even publications on the content of phonics from within the whole language community (e.g., Wilde, 1997). Hull's vintage programmed self-instructional text has appeared in its seventh edition (Hull & Fox, 1966/1998). At a more theoretical level, Richard Venezky's forthcoming *Letters and the Noises They Make* (his revision of *The Structure of English Orthography*) promises to be helpful (Venezky, 1970; in press).

There are other signs that the professional climate is changing. Last year the International Reading Association came out with a ringing declaration that it had believed in phonics all along (International Reading Association, 1997), and it has finally, after more than forty years of existence, actually published the first book ever to include the word "phonics" in its title (Strickland, 1998). (The work does not, however, explicate letter-sound correspondences themselves.) The new watchword among reading professionals is "balanced" reading instruction. (That used to mean, in the early 1960s, keeping phonics out. In a nice little historical irony, now it means letting phonics in!) Things are looking up.

This fuss about reading instruction is, in short, something that we in the reading profession have brought down squarely upon our own heads. But if we provoked it, we can also fix it. The key is not so much better taught children as better taught teachers. The better taught children will follow as a matter of course.

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[1] I would like to thank, without implying their endorsement of my views, Linnea Ehri and Rose-Marie Weber for their helpful comments and criticisms of early drafts of this paper.

[2] Blouke Carus, telephone communication, April 21, 1997.

[3] Charles Walcutt and his colleagues identified only eight of them in 1974 (Walcutt, Lamport & McCracken, 1974, 156-159).

[4] I am grateful to Jane Cramer of the Brooklyn College Library for searching the web for state legislation on this topic for me.

American Spelling Instruction: What History Tells Us

Bob Schlagal, Woodrow Trathen

In recent years, there has been considerable controversy regarding the best way to teach spelling. Some educators favor the use of traditional spelling books featuring the weekly spelling list (Templeton, 1991); others argue that arbitrary list learning should be abandoned and that spelling instruction should be integrated with other subject areas (Wilde, 1990). The first position maintains that English spelling is learned developmentally through formal study of some 3,000 words across grades 2 to 8, emphasizing that the internalization of these words and the patterns they represent provides an important foundation for spelling and reading the English orthography (Chomsky & Halle, 1968; Henderson, 1981; Schlagal, 1992). In this framework, spelling textbooks offer the teacher an organization of developmentally appropriate word patterns for students to learn at each level. The other position argues that a spelling curriculum is unnecessary (and undesirable) because a teacher can best facilitate spelling development through rich, varied writing opportunities where spelling errors can be responded to as they come up (Bean & Bouffler, 1987; Wilde, 1990, 1992).

This controversy has found its way to schools where the once uniform and often perfunctory business of spelling instruction has been transformed, as the old tools of spelling instruction have given way to a remarkable variety of approaches. Here are a few of the ways that teachers handle spelling in one fairly conservative and predominantly rural county near our own:

One teacher approaches the teaching of spelling in mini-workshops that she convenes to address problem words she identifies from her students' reading or writing—the Opportunistic Approach. Another teacher in the same school has students record words they have misspelled in a special notebook; students use these notebooks as references and the teacher draws from them to construct individual word lists for weekly spelling tests—the Individualized Approach. In another school teachers create lists for weekly tests from content vocabulary that students encounter in their various subjects. Sometimes new science words comprise the list, at other times social studies words, and so on—the Content Vocabulary Approach. And in one case the teacher, in order to make students more attentive to the meanings of words and to context as a whole, places all of her content words into a paragraph which students must master in its entirety—the Context Approach. In a middle school in the same county, the administration has concluded that students often enter middle school with deficiencies in both vocabulary and spelling. In response, the school requires students to memorize (read, spell, and define) 30 or more Latin and Greek derived words each week, drawn serially from a large alphabetically ordered corpus of words. No effort is made to organize these lists around specific roots and combine forms to illustrate the spelling-meaning connections readily available among these low-frequency words. Nor is there any effort to control difficulty. Instead words are simply presented as individual items to be memorized one at a time—the Greek and Latin Vocabulary Approach. In most cases teachers using these approaches remain somewhat dissatisfied with the results. One particularly frustrated teacher threw up her hands in despair and pulled out the old basal speller. "I know I'm not supposed to do this," she told us. "The spelling books are supposed to be bad, but I don't know what else to do. I don't feel like anything that I've tried has made any difference."

Where did all of these approaches come from? How did such variety appear so suddenly in an area of instruction which has long been dominated by the study of carefully prepared word lists presented in spellers? For the most part, the approaches we have described have arisen as logical responses—at times a kind of desperate logic—to an unspecified spelling curriculum. They are, in essence, stop-gap measures used to teach spelling skills in the absence of organized, sequential spelling texts.

We all know what accounts for the loss of the traditional spelling curriculum. On the promise that skills develop best when rooted in natural, meaningful contexts (Bean & Bouffler, 1987; Wilde, 1990; Wilde, 1992)—not when studied or practiced in isolation—and with

the encouragement of state department personnel, many schools have eliminated their spelling texts. But poor showings on end of grade spelling measures, parental reactions to their children's persistent invented spellings, and a growing teacher sense that students just weren't "getting it," led most teachers to return to some kind of direct spelling work. While many of the approaches described above seem reasonable, teachers have adopted them without knowing whether their new approaches would work any better or worse than the traditional programs they replaced and without any consideration of a century long history of spelling instruction and research—a history which reveals that most of these "new" strategies have been tried out directly or in variants in the past and have been discarded as ineffective.

While there are decided shortcomings to be found in contemporary basal spellers—shortcomings which should not be ignored—they possess some clear and proven strengths. It is important at this juncture to see what both historic and contemporary research tell us about spelling instruction. In this paper, we present a very brief overview of the major findings in the history of spelling research; and we report some recent research which we believe points in a direction which if taken should improve the quality of spelling instruction.

Historic Research on Spelling Instruction

Spelling texts like Webster's "Blue-backed Speller" were central to the teaching of reading in the 19th century. Such texts were designed not only to teach spelling but also pronunciation as well as grammar, and they provided passages for reading and moral and religious improvement. Lists were extremely long and were presented as tasks for rote memory and personal improvement. (Included in such spelling lists were many relatively rare and erudite words that the literate adult *should* but didn't necessarily know.) Efforts to adjust the difficulty of the words to an audience of school children were almost non-existent. Interestingly, an examination of the word lists of these early spellers shows them to be similar in many respects to the lists of Latin and Greek derived words being used with the middle school students, mentioned above: they, like their 19th century counterparts are being asked to learn new meanings, new concepts, pronunciations, and spellings all at once.

In the early 20th century the focus of spelling books narrowed, leaving behind the larger issues of the language arts to focus more directly on spelling. But the books continued the practice of testing children on large numbers of words—as many as fifty—each week (Hanna, Hodges, & Hanna, 1971). Like their predecessors, these

spellers offered words for memorization with no particular orthographic principle to guide their selection and presentation. Some books presented lists in alphabetical order; others made a rough effort to control difficulty by number of syllables, with one and two syllable words taught before three and four syllable words. The words were presented as separate units to be memorized one-by-one.

Serious research on spelling began at this time and was directed toward the issue of memory and to questions of whether it was more advantageous to teach spelling words by a context versus a list method. Also researchers looked into the question of the relative value of a study-test versus test-study-test approach to spelling.

It was not until the 1930s that educators began to organize spelling lists around words most frequently used in reading and writing (Rinsland, 1945; Thorndike, 1921). Lists were graded for difficulty by their frequency—the more commonly used words being taught first—and by word length. The advent of frequency lists allowed for a much finer control of difficulty as well as some guarantee that the words that children learned to spell would be the ones that they needed for their writing. In fact, it has been demonstrated that the 4000 most frequently used words constitute nearly 98 per cent of the vocabulary used by children and adults in and out of school. However, this core vocabulary does not represent the total spelling needs of any individual (T.D. Horn, 1969). As an effort, therefore, to better meet individual needs and incorporate incidental types of learning into the formal study of spelling, students were asked to compile individual notebooks—My Own Words—comprised of words they had misspelled or needed in their writing (Hanna, et al., 1971).

Memory research was combined with the new controlled word lists, and in the 1930s and 40s there evolved new strategies for dealing with word learning (Hanna, et al., 1971). The familiar and useful *study method* arose in which students (1) looked at a word, (2) pronounced the word, (3) closed their eyes and spelled the word, (4) wrote the word, and (5) checked the spelling of the word, repeating all the steps if necessary. The antiquated practice of writing words repeatedly until they were committed to memory gave way to the *practice method* wherein missed words were rewritten correctly three times. Respecting this more modest practice, Henderson (1990) states that the aspirin principle should apply: "One helps a lot; two are almost twice as helpful, a third adds very little more, and four are bad for the stomach" (p. 90). In fact, copying a word over correctly more than three times appears to be counter productive, effecting the quality of attention and inducing students to apply desperate measures like writing all the first

letters first, then all the second letters, and so on, destroying the kinesthetic image which is a legitimate part of word knowledge (Fernald, 1943; Gillingham & Stillman, 1997; Hildreth, 1955).

Also during this time, the preponderance of investigations favoring a test-study-test approach led to the regular use of a *pre-test* prior to study in spelling practice. Particularly when the pre-test is *self-corrected* (calling attention to the words and parts of words that children need to attend to), the test-study-test method was shown to lead to greater spelling gains than any other instructional plan (T.D. Horn, 1947; Reid & Hieronymous, 1963). Attention to the results of pre-tests also led investigators to an increasing awareness of individual differences among students, a topic we will return to. This increased awareness led authorities to exhort teachers that "The varying needs of individuals be considered. The learning of the gifted child," said Fitzgerald (1951, p.8), "should not be limited to that of the average, nor should the very slow child be overwhelmed in the hopeless undertaking of studying the normal allotment of words for the average child." In addition to the weekly plan of instruction, the practices of *periodic review* and of *distributing small amounts of study across the week* (as opposed to a massed period of instruction) found continued support and were adopted into the instructional scheme (T.D. Horn, 1969). And last, experts recognized that there should be a balance between known and unknown spellings prior to the study of a list of words, a balance which is crucial in predicting the likelihood mastering and retaining correct spellings from the exercise (Henderson, 1990).

In the 1950s spelling experts began to respond to criticisms about the presentation of words in the spellers. Although words were controlled for difficulty, they were not organized to promote orthographic generalization. That is, they did not serve to illustrate any spelling patterns which might be grasped and applied to other contexts. The obvious feature being neglected in the word lists was the phoneme-grapheme correspondence which must obtain in any alphabetic orthography. During this era the first major computerized investigation into the nature and consistency of phoneme-grapheme correspondences in English spelling was conducted (Hanna, Hanna, Hodges, & Rudorf, 1966). The results demonstrated a surprising degree of consistency in the system—a consistency which extended well beyond the basic high frequency vocabulary taught in spellers. Further studies have substantiated and extended these results, taking account of the morphophonemic character of English spelling (Venezky, 1967). Subsequently, basal spellers moved toward *word lists designed to illustrate the orderly functioning of the spelling system*. Unfortunately, however, these efforts have not always been driven by a thorough knowledge of the principles that inform English spelling (Cummings, 1988).

More recently researchers have turned away from questions about what words to teach and how to teach them; instead they have focussed their attention on how learners acquire orthographic knowledge (Nelson, 1989). The developmental nature of orthographic knowledge has been described and documented (Henderson, 1990; Henderson & Beers, 1980; Read, 1975; Schlagal, 1992; Templeton & Bear, 1992). These descriptions show how learners appear to move in logical ways from simple concrete sound-letter mapping to pattern driven spelling to a growing awareness and control of the meaning-by-pattern spellings of low-frequency Latin and Greek derived vocabulary. This developmental research has had some influence on contemporary basal spellers (the current versions of the Houghton Mifflin and Zaner-Bloser series, for instance), affecting the particular kind and order of features presented for study. And it has led to the elaboration of highly individualized *developmentally driven plans for the systematic teaching of the orthography* (Bear, Invernizzi, Templeton, & Johnston, 1996; Bloodgood, 1991; Henderson, 1981; Morris, 1992).

In the main, however, developmental studies have been interpreted as proof that systematic spelling instruction is not necessary. That is, the developmental nature of orthographic learning has been advanced as a chief rationale for incidental, opportunistic approaches to spelling. From that point of view, then, spelling should be handled only as is necessary and always in the context of reading and written communication, and particularly during the editing and proofreading phase of writing (Wilde, 1990). Learning to spell, it is argued, extends from rich and guided involvement with written language, not in formal practice and study. Or as is stated by the Chairman of the North Carolina State Board of Education and the State Superintendent in an official guide designed to assist teachers in transitioning from "textbook spelling to spelling in use: The best medium for teaching spelling is in the context of students' reading and writing and discussions of reading selections from literature, content material, informational texts, and practical texts." Interestingly, a good number of earlier spelling studies examined the issue of incidental and opportunistic learning and found them wanting.

Certainly, there is no denying that the practice of reading and writing and proofreading have an impact on spelling development. That students learn to read new words through reading and learn how to spell many of them in the process is evident (Henderson, 1981). Yet such indirect or incidental learning may be quite temporary unless direct study serves to fix it more permanently in memory (Henderson, 1981; T.D. Horn, 1969). In other words, the ordinary practice of reading appears to sensitize readers to the spellings of the

words read; but without some explicit attention to and practice with those words, their spellings are soon lost. None the less, despite the superiority of direct versus incidental teaching (Fitzgerald, 1951; E. Horn, 1950; McKee, 1939; Wallin, 1911; Winch, 1916), experts have advocated a *combined* approach, concluding that *efficiency in spelling is obtained from both direct and incidental learning* [our emphasis] and that a "well-planned course of study in spelling will consider direct and incidental methods for teaching and learning spelling..." (Fitzgerald, 1951, p. 28). Or as Thomas Horn (1969) stated,

> It is very probable that spelling ability is best developed and maintained in the long run through stimulation of, and careful attention to, the writing that children do. On the other hand, there is as yet no field-tested substitute for direct instruction on the basic core of high-frequency words needed in child and adult writing. (p. 1285)

Having found the incidental and opportunistic approaches alone inadequate to their needs, many contemporary teachers have moved to create formal contexts for spelling study. By contriving a context—a paragraph or set of sentences in which to study a set of target words—teachers feel that the teaching is more "authentic" because the words are presented and learned in a context and not in isolation; and they are presenting words in a way distinctly different from the rejected spelling basal. Interestingly, studies beginning in the 1920s have repeatedly demonstrated that students learning to spell words from lists consistently performed better than those learning them from context (Hawley & Gallup, 1922; E. Horn, 1967; Horn & Otto, 1954; McKee, 1924). The use of lists (as opposed to contexts) serves to highlight the spellings of words apart from the distractions and complexities of meaning, syntax, punctuation, and handwriting (Fitzgerald, 1951). In fact, the use of context appears to be advantageous *only* when the meaning of words is in question, as when homonyms are being taught (Graham, 1983).

Nor does proofreading appear to be a good method of teaching spelling. As Thomas Horn (1969) points out, early studies found that students are not typically very good at proofreading. And they are also less able to identify errors in their own compositions than in others'. They can, however, make improvements in their proofreading skills with sustained instruction and regular practice (Hildreth, 1955), though it remains a challenging task, as any professional proofreader can attest. Given the basic difficulties inherent in proofreading, it would appear that this valuable activity should be pursued on its own merits—but not as a means for teaching spelling.

Currently the use of curriculum based content vocabulary words to form spelling lists is a fairly common alternative to the traditional spelling list. Because such lists are drawn from meaningful subject areas and are thematically organized, they are taken to be superior to the "less meaningful" core frequency lists used in the traditional speller. But again research has not supported this approach. Conversely, familiarity with spelling words being taught is essential to helping students master the linguistic principles of English spelling that underlie the orthographic structure of individual words (Henderson, 1990; Schlagal & Schlagal, 1992; Templeton, 1991). Content vocabulary words are by their very nature low-frequency words; they are likely to embody challenging concepts; and they are introduced into the content curriculum without respect to orthographic patterns since their primary purpose is to advance ideas and not to teach orthography. Not only do such content lists present unusual challenges (like our middle school's Greek and Latin derived lists) but they fail to present the patterning from which spelling principles may be learned. Each word must be memorized as a separate item. Further, time spent memorizing such a list falls under the law of diminishing returns. That is, by focusing instruction on low frequency words, students—should they master and retain these words—are learning the spellings of words for which they will have very little use in the demands of ordinary writing (Horn & Otto, 1954).

Summary of Historic Research

Before passing on to consider some contemporary studies which integrate developmental perspectives into the use of basal spellers, let us review the basic principles and practices established by an earlier era of research and teaching:

1. Learning to spell words from lists is more efficient than learning them from context.

2. Creating spelling words from frequency lists (rather than from content vocabulary) guarantees the usefulness of the words for most writing demands. Words learned from the 4000 most commonly used words (accounting for nearly 98 per cent of words used in ordinary writing) provide a "security blanket" leading to greater fluency in writing.

3. Controlling the difficulty of lists by relative frequency and by word length successfully differentiates task difficulty.

4. The organization of spelling lists should highlight linguistic principles of English spelling (e.g., phoneme-grapheme,

sound-to-pattern, and meaning-to-pattern principles) to promote the development of *orthographic concepts*.

5. Organizational principles introduced should have reasonable generality.

6. Orthographic patterns taught should be introduced in relation to documented developmental trends.

7. Words and patterns taught should be subject to periodic review.

8. Study of spelling words should be distributed in small amounts across the week, rather than concentrated in large but less frequent amounts.

9. Pretests should be used prior to a teaching unit, and children should self-correct their errors, copying them over correctly *no more than three times*.

10. A study method should be taught and practiced ("look, say, cover, write, check").

In addition, the following recommendations have been strongly advanced from within the traditional model of spelling instruction:

11. Students should have ample opportunity to practice and apply growing skills through abundant writing.

12. Opportunities for incidental spelling instruction should be exploited to better meet individual needs, broaden understanding, and assist students in application of the spellings and principles taught.

13. Students should be able to read the words they are being asked to spell.

14. Students should be guided in understanding words by their spoken and written patterns.

Contemporary Research on Spelling Instruction

While some contemporary spelling series have made an effort to apply insights drawn from developmental research into the organization and presentation of word patterns, one consideration which has

not been effectively addressed is that of differences in individual development. While some efforts have been made to allow for differences in development—largely in the form of recommendations advanced in teacher's editions—spelling books remain relatively fixed in their design. That is, spelling books are produced for a given grade level of instruction, and, despite recommendations to do otherwise, teachers use a single grade-level list to teach all children in their classes, regardless of varied levels of instructional need.

To effectively individualize instruction for every student in class would be a difficult, time-consuming task, requiring a great deal of formal knowledge both of our English orthographic system and how children develop within it. And such an approach would require remarkable administrative gifts. An alternative way to address differences in development is offered through adjusting instructional levels. Following up on a study by Schlagal (1982), Morris, Nelson, and Perney (1986) explored the concept of "spelling instructional level" through an analysis of error-types and found that there was a strong correlation between the quantity and the quality of a student's errors. More particularly, they found that there was a marked deterioration of the quality of students' errors when they were scoring less than 30 per cent on a grade level spelling test. This finding lends support to the notion that there is an empirically optimal level of instruction. Morris and his colleagues concluded that the low achieving students in their study appeared not to have established sufficient knowledge of spelling patterns to benefit from instruction offered unfortunately at their frustration level.

In a later study Morris, Blanton, Blanton, and Perney (1995) tracked instructional and frustrational third and fifth grade students (as defined by scores on a curricular pretest) across a year of instruction in traditional spelling books. Students working at their instructional level learned and retained the bulk of the words they were taught and were able to use their knowledge of grade level words to effectively spell words of similar difficulty they had not studied. Students working at their frustration level—those scoring less than 40 per cent on the curricular pretest—did well on end-of-week tests but very poorly on pretests for the six week review units (a strong measure of retention). Note that these students might be described as ones who "know the words on Friday, but have lost them on Monday." Not only did the frustration-level students retain significantly less than the instructional-level students (less than 50 per cent), they were also far less able to transfer what they had learned to similar words they had not studied. Morris and his colleagues conclude that for students taught at their instructional level, traditional spellers such as the

ones used in their study provide an effective, developmentally appropriate instructional tool. Students taught at their frustration level, however, are unlikely to master the words they have been taught or internalize the patterns that underlie them.

In a follow-up to the previous study, Morris, Blanton, Blanton, Nowacek, and Perney (1995) tracked low-achieving spellers for a year, half of whom were placed at their instructional level and half of whom were taught in grade-level (frustration level) spelling books. The results revealed significant gains for the intervention group in mastering the instructional level word lists. However, retention in the comparison group—low spellers taught at grade level (frustration)—was poor, mirroring the findings of previous study. Interestingly, students taught in below grade level texts not only made solid gains at their instructional level but also scored no worse than their peers on the grade level posttest consisting of words on which the intervention group had not been instructed. What is more, the intervention group scored significantly better than the comparison group on a transfer test of grade-level words neither had studied. How they made gains in grade-level words was not a question asked in the study, but the authors suggest that by solidifying their knowledge of the spelling system at a lower level of complexity, students were better able to learn something about grade-level words through incidental reading and writing.

Morris and his group concluded that spelling achievement can be improved by having students study words at an appropriate difficulty level. Or said differently, some children may have insufficiently developed word knowledge for a given level of words; and study at that level will produce minimal learning. If teachers can provide instructionally appropriate lists for their weakest students, then significant gains can be made.

The rationale for adopting a spelling instructional level finds support in studies of the English spelling system which show that, like any other system, it is a rule-ordered whole (Cummings, 1988). Descriptions of this structure are plentiful (Chomsky, 1971; Chomsky & Halle, 1968; Dixon, 1977; Hanna, et al., 1966; Venezky, 1967). Learning to spell, however, involves years of schooling and occurs at different rates for different students. Henderson (1990) has argued that these developmental differences in rate of learning are determined by children's orthographic knowledge. That is, the relationship between a child's orthographic knowledge and the complexity of the orthographic structures being taught will predict how much can be learned, retained, and generalized. In addition, there are substantive

dimensions of English spelling which are hierarchically organized (Cummings, 1988). Cummings identifies two types of spelling rules in English. "Tactical rules" are spelling rules that deal with strings of sounds and letters; "procedural rules" are rules that deal with the way morphological elements are combined to create written forms. A learner who stabilizes structural principles at a primary level (often tactical rules) can more effectively control principles at a complex level (often procedural rules). For example, a speller of English who understands and controls the tactical rule governing long versus short vowel distinctions (bat, bake) can better understand and control the procedural rule governing the doubling of consonants when adding a suffix (batting, baking). Good spelling instruction, therefore, may be the search for an appropriate match between a child's current state of word knowledge and the orthographic structure she is called upon to study.

Trathen, Morris, and Schlagal (1995) conducted a study in which they tested the effectiveness of matching spelling instruction to students' knowledge of the orthographic system. That is, the study examined whether for individual students there is an optimal level of spelling difficulty (orthographic complexity) that maximizes learning.

Students in their intervention group represented a wide range of orthographic knowledge independent of grade placement. These students were categorized as high, mid, and low levels of orthographic knowledge. Spelling instruction centered around major structural elements in the English spelling system and progressed in difficulty each of four weeks. For example, the first week of instruction dealt with the tactical rule of short vowel versus long vowel with an e-marker. The next week of instruction built on the previous rule and extended it into the procedural rule for doubling consonants when adding *-ing* to maintain the integrity of the short vowel in the stem (e.g., tap to tapping). It further involved the dropping of the *e* marker when the stem contained a long vowel (e.g., tape to taping). For the third week of instruction, the doubling rule was extended to the environment of bound morphemes and syllable juncture—a more complex application of the previous rule (e.g., happen). For the final week, the instructional focus was on the combination of the two versions of the procedural rule applied in a single word (e.g., happening). Weekly spelling instruction followed the traditional plan described above. In addition, word sorting activities were used to highlight target patterns (Bear, et al., 1996; Henderson, 1981; Morris, 1992). The critical element in this instruction was the manipulation of the complexity of the words across the intervention.

Comparing across the levels of orthographic knowledge for the treatment group, the data revealed that students' prior knowledge of orthography affected learning of new orthographic information. That is, low level spelling group's scores topped out after the first week of instruction, indicating that the levels above were too difficult. The mid level group topped out after the second week of instruction, and the high level group after the third week. These patterns were evident on posttests given at the end of the 4 weeks' instruction and again after a period of 6 weeks. These results provide support for the notion that the demands of spelling are hierarchical and that what students have learned about orthography will directly affect what they can learn from spelling instruction. In fact, scores on the initial diagnostic spelling inventory were a better predictor of learning than age or grade level. It seems reasonable to conclude that teachers can improve students' learning of English orthography by matching instruction to students' levels of knowledge—that is, through instructional groupings that honor students' particular levels of development.

To further test the effectiveness of instructional grouping, Schlagal, Trathen, Mock, and McIntire (1998) compared spelling instruction in four sixth-grade classes in four schools; two of the classes received regular spelling instruction and two grouped students for instruction, based on spelling assessment scores. The schools were matched on SES and achievement scores; the students were matched on knowledge of English orthography. Grouping in the two classes resulted in three levels for instruction with matching material—6th, 5th, and 3rd/4th grade. The lessons lasted about 20 minutes and used instructional strategies similar to the Trathen, Morris, and Schlagal study (1995). Analysis of posttest data revealed that students in classes with leveled instruction scored significantly higher, especially the lower knowledge level spellers. In general, lower ability spellers in leveled spelling instruction gained at least a year in spelling, unleveled low spellers made no such gains. Mid level spellers showed moderate gains with leveled instruction, but high level spellers performed the same regardless of group and spelling instruction. In comparison to non-grouped spellers, lower and mid ability spellers in leveled spelling instruction showed significant gains on reading performance as evidenced by word recognition and IRI scores (Woods & Moe, 1981).

Discussion

Results of the instructional level studies reported here offer a cogent developmental explanation for the familiar teacher complaint that some students "know their spelling words for Friday's test, but

have forgotten them by Monday." According to these findings, this phenomenon is not effectively explained by the conclusion that traditional spellers "just don't work." Rather, a better explanation is that the students in question have been taught above their instructional level. Teachers can test the hypothesis that these students are placed over their heads by giving a pretest of the weeks' spelling words to students that have not studied for the test. Problem spellers are likely to demonstrate insufficient orthographic knowledge—both quantitatively and qualitatively—to support learning from grade level lists. (Students scoring around 30% or below are at their frustration level.)

Moving children out of their frustration level and into words more appropriate in difficulty appears to change the pattern of low-group learning. When placed in more developmentally appropriate lists, low achieving spellers respond to instruction like their high achieving peers; that is, they profit from the instruction given them, retaining the majority of what has been taught and at the same time are able to generalize patterns and principles learned to similar words not studied.

Conclusion

This review of both historic and contemporary spelling research sheds new light on the role that systematic spelling instruction can and should play in the classroom. While a variety of teachers (and school systems) have experimented with spelling instruction by replacing spelling textbooks with incidental and opportunistic approaches to spelling, most have returned to some kind of direct instruction. And this direct instruction commonly involves lists of words—class generated or content vocabulary lists—for study and testing. Again, such approaches are not innovations but spontaneous regenerations of methods tried in the past and replaced over time by the research-based methods reported in the first part of this paper.

Research into developmental orthographic learning has provided the field with important new insights. Specifically, the finding that children move from concrete letter-sound matching to increasingly pattern and meaning driven strategies gives additional weight to the practice of careful, linguistically controlled presentations of spelling words. The introduction of spelling patterns may now be coordinated with norms drawn from developmental research. And these in turn may be coordinated with the increasingly detailed descriptions of the hierarchy of English spelling. Further, there is sufficient developmental variation in any classroom to call into question the traditional use of spelling words drawn from a single corpus of grade level words. If spelling instruction is to meet varied developmental needs, then the

use of multiple lists at the necessary developmental levels will have become part of ordinary instruction. Results from recent studies investigating the effectiveness and practicality of teaching from multiple lists have been quite promising. We now know enough to profit from both the older and the newer traditions in spelling research; and coupled with an informed knowledge of the system of English spelling, we should be able to offer optimal instruction to every child. Referring to a judicious combination of these things, the late Edmund Henderson remarked over a decade ago that, "we now understand both the language and the stages that children move through on their way to its mastery. That is why I am convinced that, *if we teach them*, all normal children *can* learn to spell English" (1990, 206).

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Reaching Consensus on Standards for Adult Literacy Assessment: Finding our Roots, not Creating Ruts

Eunice N. Askov

The author was awarded a Literacy Leader Fellowship at the National Institute for Literacy to conduct two initiatives, namely, (1) describing the various efforts related to skill standards and other policy initiatives for those who may not be directly involved in those efforts, and (2) writing skill descriptions as the framework for workplace literacy skill standards, especially for those basic skills needed for the workplace. The complete report is available from the National Institute for Literacy (Askov, 1996).

During the fellowship period, a total of 12 contracted weeks, the skill standards and assessment efforts resulting from the changing business environment were reviewed as part of the first activity of the fellowship. This research was reported in the 1997 *Yearbook of the American Reading Forum* (Askov, 1997). Briefly, skill standards define what a person should know and be able to do. This effort related to the workplace is being partially funded by the government (US Departments of Education and Labor) with leadership from the private sector which is defining the skills needed for jobs in various workplaces.

The purpose of the current study was to define a common set of basic skills for the workplace which was the second task of the Literacy Leader Fellowship. In other words, these skill standards would define what a person would know and be able to do related to literacy. These skill descriptions could serve as a starting point for educators involved in School-to-Work (1994) or workforce preparation

programs. The intent of these skill descriptions is not to ignore the great variability that exists in US workplaces. Instead, the purpose is to provide guidance to those service providers who are inexperienced or untrained in designing instruction for workplace literacy or workforce preparation programs and to those involved in the development of occupational skill standards.

The curricula created by the US Department of Education's National Workplace Literacy Program (NWLP) were the data source for this study. Each NWLP project was funded to create a job-specific or job-related curriculum that teaches the basic skills needed for performing jobs in the particular partner company. These curricula, available at the US Department of Education, are resources that can offer guidance in setting skill standards for workplace literacy by providing examples of how these skills have been implemented in workplace literacy programs.

Procedures and Results

The researcher spent a week at the US Department of Education reviewing the curricula that were on file. The survey of NWLP curricula resulted in 208 entries in a *Filemaker Pro* database. These represented 45 sources, mostly educational providers, that created curricula with NWLP funding between 1990-94. The sample size is small, given that the NWLP has funded about 50 projects during each "wave" or funding cycle. This sample, drawn from the second to the fifth waves, was selected according to the following criteria: (1) the curriculum was on file at the US Department of Education (some projects provided only final reports or samples from the curricula), (2) the literacy task analysis process being used was evident in the final report, and (3) a customized curriculum for teaching job-specific or job-related basic skills resulted from the project. Curricula for teaching the GED were not included in the analysis. Curricula that consisted primarily of generic instructional materials and curricula that appeared to teach technical skills rather than literacy skills were not included.

Of the occupations analyzed, 103 jobs were from the manufacturing sector; 34 from healthcare; and 71 were categorized as "other", which may be other occupations or unspecified occupations. While this sampling of the NWLP curricula was greatly constrained by the length of the Literacy Leader Fellowship period (12 weeks total), it was based on the criteria stated above. It was originally hoped that unique skills could be identified for various occupational clusters from the NWLP curricula. This effort proved to be impossible since many providers worked with several industries, not necessarily of the same occupational cluster, within a given community.

The NWLP curricula focused on literacy skills at various levels of specificity, ranging from curricula built around job-specific literacy skills to general workplace literacy skills. The sample of NWLP curricula for this study included 108 entries that were job-specific, 56 that were specific to the company, 45 specific to the industry, and 39 related to general workplace skills. (Numbers do not total to 208 entries since some curricula were focused at more than one level.)

The categories of the Occupational Information Network or O*NET (US Department of Labor, 1995) which are partially based on the SCANS categories (US Department of Labor, Secretary's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills, 1991) were used as the framework for coding the basic skills. Since O*NET's skill definitions were derived from careful review of prior pertinent research, including observations and interviews in actual workplaces, and since these skill definitions will be used to describe jobs in the future, it made sense to use them as the basis for developing skill definitions for workplace literacy. Some adaptations in the draft O*NET language were made to fit the present purpose, recognizing that the O*NET terminology may change as it is developed. The literacy skills of the sample NWLP curricula included the following basic skills categories with the number of occurrences:

Reading Comprehension	41
Writing	38
Oral Communication	35
Quantitative	38
Problem Solving	23
Critical Thinking	15
Knowing How to Learn	5

These numbers are distorted by the fact that general skills lists such as the Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment System (CASAS, 1989) were entered into the database only once. More than ten percent of the programs in the sample actually used the CASAS framework as the basis for organizing the basic skills in the workplace. Since most of the curricula did not state which CASAS skills were identified, multiple entries were not made in the database. Therefore, CASAS skills actually occurred more often in the NWLP

curricula than are noted above. The point is to note that the traditional reading, writing, and math skills were the ones most frequently taught (along with Oral Communication which was primarily for English-as-a-Second Language classes), based on a task analysis of the literacy needs of the workers in the partner companies. Knowing How to Learn, and metacognitive, skills were seldom taught in the curricula that were reviewed.

Framework for Developing the Skill Standards

The standards developed by the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics or NCTM (Malcom, 1993) served as the model for developing skill standards for the basic skills descriptions. The context for these skill descriptions is the workplace. Examples from the NWLP curricula provide examples of contextualization of these skills. These examples provide the context that one needs for understanding skills and standards (Hull & Sechler, 1987). Processes rather than isolated skills are provided to demonstrate the dynamic nature of the workplace application of skills. Skill descriptions are artificial, but convenient, categories; skills, however, are not applied in isolation but in combination in the workplace. For example, reading is usually accompanied by writing in accomplishing a workplace task. The skills with the most frequently identified examples from the NWLP curricula follow:

Reading Comprehension

*Draft O*NET Definition*: Decodes, interprets, and comprehends information drawn from written documents, etc.

Some examples of skills which are found frequently in the NWLP curricula are:

- Recognize technical vocabulary used at the workplace, including abbreviations
- Follow written directions
- Locate information
- Scan materials for specific facts
- Read for details

Writing

*Draft O*NET Definition:* Communicates thoughts, ideas, information, and messages in writing; planning, generating, and revising text.

Some examples from the NWLP curricula are:

- Write short notes and simple memos
- Enter or transfer information onto a form
- Flowchart prose information
- Take telephone messages accurately

Oral Communication

*Adapted Draft O*NET Definition*: Communicates thoughts, ideas, and information orally, attending to the comprehension of listeners and the demands of the setting.

The NWLP curricula contain examples of skills such as:

- Listen, especially to follow verbal instructions to perform a job task
- Ask and answer simple questions
- Make requests for supplies, days off, etc.
- Use correct grammar and word choice
- Participate actively in team meetings, listening to the input of others and expressing his/her own contributions

Quantitative

Definition: Understands basic mathematical computations and problem solving procedures and how these procedures might be used to address various problems.

The NWLP curricula tend to focus heavily on computational skills as prerequisite to higher level operations:

- Perform addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division including whole numbers and multiple operations, common or mixed fractions, decimals, and percentages
- Convert decimals, fractions, and percentages
- Interpret ratio and proportion
- Convert numbers to and from the metric system
- Interpret data from graphs and tables
- Measure with a ruler and use measurements in solving problems such as finding area

Problem Solving

*Adapted Draft O*NET Definition*: Understands basic problem solving procedures and how these procedures might be used to address various problems.

The NWLP curricula have relatively few examples of formal problem solving skills although some curricula embed problem solving and critical thinking activities into their basic skills instruction. Some examples are:

- Differentiate, sort, and classify information
- Formulate, evaluate, and choose options in solving problems
- Trouble shoot, quickly identifying and solving problems as they arise
- Predict outcomes based on available information
- Prioritize job tasks for effectiveness and efficiency

Critical Thinking

*Draft O*NET Definition*: Recognizes and can analyze the strengths and weaknesses of arguments and propositions using logic to establish the validity of these propositions.

In the NWLP curricula, critical and creative thinking are combined. Some examples are:

- Participate in brainstorming sessions
- Judge the credibility of sources of information
- Distinguish major problems from minor ones
- Differentiate between relevant and irrelevant information
- Compare and contrast information

Knowing How To Learn

*Adapted Draft O*NET Definition*: Identifies and uses various alternative strategies for working on learning tasks, looking for examples, taking notes, and identifying alternative strategies for working with material.

One NWLP project, entitled S.C.O.R.E. (Sales and Customer Service Occupational Readiness Education, 1994), which developed computer-based and classroom materials for AT&T, targets basic skills for customer service and telephone sales workers. The classroom portion of the program involves instruction in metacognitive and self-regulatory strategies in the work context. These strategies are further reinforced in the computer courseware.

While most of the NWLP curricula give relatively little emphasis to skills in this category, Heiman & Slomianki (1994) have developed a "learning how to learn" curriculum for industries in Massachusetts. This skill cluster becomes particularly important in industries adopting high performance work patterns since workplace requirements are changing rapidly especially in response to new technology. These skills are very important in formal and informal training so that workers do not lose more time than necessary away from their jobs. Some examples from the NWLP curricula are:

- Apply appropriate learning style, techniques, strategies, tools, and resources
- Manage time effectively, estimating the time to perform each task
- Maintain a high level of concentration

Examples from the NWLP Curricula

Skills are not used in isolation in the workplace. An example of an integrated skills activity is a worker reading gauges, recording the numbers on a form, interpreting the findings (perhaps having to calculate averages or perform other math operations with the numbers obtained), and writing the information in a brief memo to the next shift. This relatively simple activity uses skills that are found in most of the categories. The worker must first use problem solving and critical thinking when machinery is not functioning properly and the gauges do not yield expected results. Then the worker must be able to evaluate the information and weigh the alternatives of various actions to correct the situation. Oral communication may become important as she or he might have to explain the problem to a supervisor or a work team.

Another example of how the skills are applied in an integrated way is with non-native speakers of English. Role-play might be used to teach hotel workers, for example, how to greet coworkers, supervisors, and guests, how to deal with routine requests and problems, and how to solve problems that might not be routine. In addition to the oral communication skills, workers need to be able to perform the other literacy skills that a native speaker does, including reading instructions, making notes about the condition of rooms, checking a pay stub for accuracy of pay (calculating the correct pay based on the number of hours worked), and participating in team meetings.

In summary, skills are not performed in isolation in the workplace. If the educational provider is offering separate courses by skill category, such as reading, writing, math, and oral communication, these skills must also be presented and practiced in integrated skills activities to encourage transfer to the workplace. Even the effort of establishing skill standards could run counter to the need for integrating the skills. If literacy providers focus only on the skills, and teach them in isolation, workers may not be able to apply the skills in the workplace since they do not appear in isolation.

Discussion and Conclusions

The task of writing standards for workplace literacy is complicated by a number of factors relating to the definition of terms. For example, what are skill standards? The legislation (National Skill Standards Act of 1994) states that they are to be measurable, including performance standards. Yet most of the government-funded pilot Occupational Skill Standards Projects (1994) have not yet arrived at the point of being able to set expected levels of performance which

would provide guidance for others. Some of the projects are global in their statements of skills; others are highly specific. Some describe the skills needed for entry-level workers; others describe various levels of tenure and competence. These projects are intended to be pilots to help identify models and best practices for the emerging system of skill standards.

The many initiatives that affect the setting of skill standards, such as O*NET, are confusing while they are in process. Most of the materials related to these initiatives are not published or easily accessible, but that is at least partially changing. For example, the O*NET Content Model report became available in the fall of 1995; recent informational updates can be found electronically on the O*NET home page (U.S. Department of Labor, 1998, http://www.doleta.gov/programs/onet/).

Given these limitations, it was concluded that: (1) No clear framework for basic skills within occupational skill standards exists, although O*NET may become the organizing structure when it is no longer in draft form; (2) NWLP curricula were not as useful in this study as anticipated because they tended to focus on the traditional literacy skills rather than on the higher-order skills needed for high performance work practices, such as those identified in O*NET.

Nevertheless, it is hoped that the skill descriptions that have been formulated here will be of use to educators who are new to workplace literacy, workforce preparation, or School-to-Work efforts. The discussion that follows summarizes some of the key considerations in using skill standards in work-related literacy programs.

How Can Skill Standards Help the Educator?

Skill standards define what current and future workers need to know and be able to do to perform successfully in the workplace. The value of standards is as a communication tool among educators (both in the K-12 system and adult education), workplace technical trainers, management, unions, the workers themselves, and those preparing for the workforce. If assessments and certification are linked to the standards, then workers can even design their own training plans using various courses offered both at the worksite and at educational institutions, such as community colleges. Certifications acknowledge and make portable workers' skills that can be taken anywhere in the country and may apply across industries; they also inform employers about what workers know and can do. The "system" becomes more straight-forward and transparent for all stakeholders.

Although Wills (1993) states that the role of the educator is to deliver services, this author believes that educators should also work with business and industry to help define the basic skills that are needed for occupational clusters of companies. In fact, the National Skill Standards Act (1994) mandates a partnership body, including educators, to develop standards; however, some difficulties have arisen in finding appropriate representatives from education who could be released from their responsibilities to participate in project activities.

Businesses and industries have taken the lead in the skill standards efforts, and this is appropriate. Educators, however, should participate in the efforts, especially in helping determine the basic skills that underlie the required job tasks. Most importantly, they need to design assessment and instruction in basic skills that relate to these job tasks. The skill descriptions derived from this research can provide guidance to educators in selecting the basic skills for assessment and instruction.

According to the legislation (National Skill Standards Act of 1994), skill standards should state not only what a worker should be able to *do* but also what a worker needs to *know*. The knowledge base is essential for the application of the skills; as the required knowledge base expands over time, skill standards must be revised accordingly. Educators may be at an initial disadvantage because they probably lack the content knowledge related to the business or industry. They may know how to teach basic skills in a generic, academic, or life skills context; however, that is not appropriate in a workplace or workforce preparation setting since skills instruction needs to be contextualized to the workplace. Therefore, it is imperative to work closely with technical trainers who may serve as "mentors" to the literacy providers in developing assessments and instruction in basic skills that are relevant to the targeted jobs and workplace.

Some of the learning in the basic skills classroom needs to be experiential and work-based, especially if performance-based assessments are used. Workers who are students in a workplace literacy program can help fill in the knowledge base of the adult educators by explaining their jobs, bringing in materials from their work, and describing critical and frequent activities related to their jobs. Educators should also tour the workplace, observe the targeted jobs being performed, and keep close contact with trainers, supervisors, and workers so that the content used for basic skills instruction is relevant to the needs of the students/workers. Again, occupational and basic skill standards can be a communication device with all these stakeholders in a workplace literacy program.

How Do Skill Standards Help with the Transfer of Skills to the Job?

Evaluations of workplace literacy programs have indicated that transfer of basic skills learned in the classroom to performance on the job is a major problem (Mikulecky & Lloyd, 1993). Similarly, those in workforce education programs have difficulty demonstrating the skills that they learned in the classroom when they attain employment in the workplace.

Use of job materials in assessment and instruction in basic skills greatly assists in transfer; if workers are learning basic skills in context, while using familiar job materials, transfer is more likely (Sticht & Armstrong, 1994). Some of the more recently identified basic skills, such as team building, communication, problem solving, and critical thinking, may be best taught through simulated job situations in the classroom. Critical events — important activities that occur frequently on the job or that have significant impact on the performance of the job — can be simulated in the classroom to assess and instruct workers in essential basic skills. These can then be reinforced by work-based learning back on the job.

Additionally, transfer can be explicitly taught through development of metacognitive (learning how to learn) skills (Thomas, Anderson, Getahun, & Cooke, 1992). (The draft O*NET labels these skills as "Knowing How To Learn.") Workers who have mastered the "Knowing How To Learn" skills have an advantage when they must apply their literacy skills, learned in one context, to another context. They also have the metacognitive strategies that enable them to learn as well as transfer that learning back to their jobs. They realize when they are not comprehending reading material and other media or reaching a solution in math. In other words, they monitor their own comprehension and can take corrective actions (Baker & Brown, 1984; Paris, Wasik, & Turner, 1991). They are active learners rather than passive recipients of information. They recognize the need for continuous learning to update their knowledge and skills.

These learners can react critically to new information, deciding whether or not it agrees with what they already know. They can also construct new meanings and interpretations, using creative thinking skills (Tennyson & Breuer, 1991). A knowledge base—content knowledge related to the workplace—is essential, however, for critical and creative thinking since, by definition, learners react to and build on what they know.

Skill standards, by defining what an individual needs to know and be able to do for successful employment, make classroom instruction

relevant to the workplace and, hence, encourage transfer to the workplace. The workplace can reinforce the need to master these skills and show how literacy skills apply on the job. Skill standards also can be used to demonstrate that transfer of learning has occurred if assessments of transfer are included in the workplace literacy evaluation plan.

A Final Note

The draft O*NET was the most usable framework for categorizing basic skills in the workplace. While basic skills in the sample NWLP curricula were not equally distributed over the O*NET categories, we recommend that workplace educators include instruction in all categories to prepare workers for the changing workplace environment. The traditional skills of reading, writing, and math are still important. However, higher-order skills of problem solving, critical thinking, and knowing how to learn are also essential, especially in restructuring organizations. These higher-order skills encourage effective learning and transfer of classroom instruction into the workplace. They help individuals think about what they are learning and how they can use the skills in the workplace.

Basic skills must be assessed and taught in the workplace context. While the skill descriptions may seem generic, we do not mean to imply that assessment and instruction should be generic. In fact, these skills must be closely tied to the occupational knowledge base of the job—one of the cornerstones of the O*NET construction. Skills and knowledge are two sides of the same coin of improving the performance of current and future workers.

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1997 Contenders/Winners: Children's Book Awards in Five English-Speaking Countries

Ira E. Aaron, Sylvia M. Hutchinson

Some excellent books for children are being published in many countries, and it is safe to conclude that those books that are winners or contenders for the top awards in countries would include some, if not all, of the best children's books published in those countries during a given year.

The 1997 winners and contenders for selected awards from five English-speaking countries form the basis for this article. The five countries are Australia, Canada, Great Britain, New Zealand, and the United States. The award categories selected in the non-U.S. countries are those most like the Caldecott and Newbery Medals of the American Library Association. The awards considered are these:

(A1) Australia: Picture Book of the Year

(A2) Australia: Book of the Year—Younger Readers

(A3) Australia: Book of the Year—Older Readers

(C1) Canada: Amelia Frances Howard Gibbon Award

(C2) Canada: Book of the Year for Children

(G1) Great Britain: Kate Greenaway Medal

(G2) Great Britain: Carnegie Medal

(N1) New Zealand: Russell Clark Award

(N2) New Zealand: Esther Glen Award

(U1) United States: Caldecott Medal

(U2) United States: Newbery Medal

Australian awards are administered by the Children's Book Council of Australia, whereas the Library Associations of the other four countries make the awards.

In references to specific titles in this article, the letters and numbers (i.e., A1 or G2) are keyed to the appropriate award category as shown in the above listing of the 11 awards. The letter A refers to Australia, C to Canada, and so on; 1 refers to awards for illustration, whereas other numbers (2 and 3) indicate awards for quality of literature.

Three of the five countries (Australia, Great Britain, and New Zealand) announced shortlists consisting of from five to eight titles for each award several months before winners from those lists were selected. The United States announced winners and honor books at the same time; Canada announced just the winner for one award and the winner plus one honor book for the second.

Characteristics of these books to be discussed are literary types, attention to multicultural and ethnic aspects, relationships among/between characters, geographical clues, and availability of non-United States titles in the United States.

The books winning or considered for awards based upon quality of illustrations (where the award goes to the illustrator) and those based upon quality of literature (where the award goes to the writer) will be delineated in the discussion. In all, 57 books (25 in one category and 32 in the other) were studied.

Literary types

The 57 books were classified into literary types. The annotated bibliography at the end of this article contains the type or types assigned to each title. This information is contained in parentheses at the end of each entry, following the brief book summary. A few books

were placed in more than one literary category since they clearly were combinations of type, as verse and realistic fiction. This classification scheme explains the differences in the number of literary types and the number of books (29 literary types vs. 25 books for illustrations and 37 literary types vs. 32 books for quality of literature). The table below summarizes the information.

Table 1

Literary Types of Children's Book Award Winners and Nominees

	Illustrations (Picture Books)						Quality of Literature					
	*A	C	G	N	U	Total	*A	C	G	N	U	Total
Realistic fiction	2	–	1	1	1	5	8	1	5	4	2	20
Fantasy (Science Fiction)	2	1	5	1	–	9	4	1	3	1	3	12
Historical Fiction	–	1	–	1	1	3	1	1	1	–	–	3
Verse	1	–	2	1	1	5	2	–	–	–	–	2
Legend/Myth	1	–	1	1	1	4	–	–	–	–	–	–
Information/Biography	–	–	–	1	2	3	–	–	–	–	–	–

*A-Australia, C-Canada, G-Great Britain, N-New Zealand, U-United States

Literary types for the winners and contenders in the illustration category ranged over six types: 9 fantasy (31%); 5 each, realistic fiction and verse (17% each); 4 legend or myth (14%); and 3 each, historical fiction and information/biography (10% each). The quality of literature winners and contenders spread over four categories: 20 realistic fiction (54%); 12 fantasy (including 1 science fiction) (32%); 3 historical fiction (8%); and 2 verse (5%).

Humor

Children—and teachers also—enjoy humorous books. Seven of the 57 books, four in the illustration and three in the quality of literature category, can be classified as humorous. These are shown in Table 2.

Table 2

Books Classified as Humorous

Illustration (Picture Books)

A1 *Sharon, Keep Your Hair On*

G1 *The Duck that Had No Luck*

G1 *OOPS!*

N1 *Nicketty-Nacketty: Noo-noo-noo*

Quality of Literature

A2 *Victor's Quest*

A2 *Don't Pat the Wombat*

G2 *Love in Cyberia*

Geography

Settings for most of the books reviewed are generic. The stories could have occurred in any one of many countries, or no clues are given about geographical settings. However, some books do have specific geographical settings or references, in text or illustrations, to specific areas.

Four of the 25 picture books (illustration awards) and 10 of the 32 books considered for or winners of the quality of literature awards contain references to or suggest specific geographical locations. These, along with the geographical areas, are as follows:

Table 3

Books with Identified Geographical Settings

Illustration (Picture Books)

A1 *Not a Nibble* (Australia's coast)

C1 *Ghost Train* (Western North America)

G1 *Down by the River* (Caribbean)

U1 *Golen* (Prague)

Quality of Literature

A2 *Don't Pat the Wombat* (Victoria, Australia)

A3 *Johnny Hart's Heroes* (Australian outback)

A3 *Beetle Soup* (Australian countryside)

C2 *Uncle Ronald* (Rural Canada north of Ottawa)

G2 *Junk* (Bristol, England)

N2 *Sanctuary* (Christchurch, New Zealand)

N2 *The Battle of Pook Island* (New Zealand)

N2 *The Other Side of Silence* (Smalltown New Zealand)

U2 *The View from Saturday* (Florida, New York State)

U2 *A Girl Named Disaster* (Zimbabwe/Mozambique)

Multicultural/Ethnic

Deciding if a book can be classified as having multicultural references is not easy. There is a tendency to classify as multicultural any book that contains a non-white character or a reference to any minority racial or ethnic group in the country where the books are published. Actions of white characters in books published or distributed in the United States seldom are categorized as multicultural, unless a specific ethnic group, as Irish American, is mentioned.

Even in many books where characters are non-white, very little of a specific cultural flavor is given. Here, only those books with specific references to an ethnic or minority group revealed in picture, in text, or in origin of the story are included. Fourteen books, 10 illustration and 4 quality of literature, contained these specific multicultural references. These are shown in Table 4.

Table 4

Multicultural/Ethnic Books

Illustration (Picture Books)

A1 *The Whalers* (Aborigine)

A1 *Let's Eat!* (Spanish)

C1 *Ghost Train* (Chinese)

G1 *Down by the River* (African-Caribbean)

G1 *Ishtar and Tammuz* (Babylonian)

N1 *George's Monster* (Maori)

N1 *Maui: Legend of the Outcast* (South Pacific)

U1 *Golem* (Jewish/Christian; Czechs/Germans; Catholic/Protestant)

U1 *Hush: A Thai Lullaby* (Thai)

U1 *The Paperboy* (African-American)

Quality of Literature

A3 *Johnny Hart's Heroes* (Aborigine)

N2 *The Battle of Pock Island* (Maori)

N2 *The Other Side of Silence* (Aborigine)

U2 *The View from Saturday* (Jewish/Protestant/East Indian)

Relationships

Interpersonal relations of children with siblings, parents, peers, teachers, older persons, and animals often are vital parts of children's stories, both in pictures and in text. Often, these relationships can be used to help young readers think about their own roles in such situations. Sometimes the relations in stories set good examples; at other times, as in *Junk* (G2), they may emphasize relations to avoid.

Six of the picture books (illustration awards) and 17 of the "quality of literature" books have strong personal relations involved in the stories. These books are shown in Table 5.

Table 5

Books that Contain Strong Personal Relations

Illustrations (Picture Books)

A1 *Not a Nibble!* (parent/child/sibling)

A1 *Let's Eat!* (parent/siblings/grandparent)

G1 *The Smallest Whale* (man/animal)

N1 *The Bantam and the Soldier* (man/animal)

N1 *George's Monster* (grandmother/grandson)

U1 *Hush! A Thai Lullaby* (mother/child)

Quality of Literature

A2 *Hannah Plus One* (parent/child/siblings)

A2 *Don't Pat the Wombat* (child/adult)

A3 *Love, Ghosts & Nose Hair* (parent/child/peer)

A3 *Peeling the Onion* (child/parent/peer/adults))

C2 *Uncle Ronald* (child/parent/adults)

G2 *Junk* (peer/child/parent/other adults)

G2 *The Tulip Touch* (peer, parent, child)

G2 *Weirdo's War* (peer/teacher)

G2 *Secret Friends* (peer)

G2 *Love in Cyberia* (parent/child/peer)

G2 *Bad Girls* (peer)

N2 *Sanctuary* (parent/child/peer)

N2 *The Battle of Pook Island* (peer)

N2 *Reliable Friendly Girls* (peer)

N2 *The Other Side of Silence* (parent/child/sibling/older person)

U2 *The View from Saturday* (teacher/parent/child/peer)

U2 *Belle Prater's Boy* (parent/child/cousins/elders)

Books Available in the United States

As would be expected, all of the 10 United States titles are in print and are available in the U.S. In addition, 11 of the 47 non-U.S. titles are also either published or distributed in the U.S., and one additional book is slated for 1998 publication. More of these 47 are very likely to become available in the U.S. during 1998. The 11 available and the one soon to be available in the U.S. are shown in Table 6.

Table 6

Non-United States Books Available in United States

Illustrations (Picture Books)

A1 *Not a Nibble!*

A1 *Let's Eat!*

C1 *Ghost Train*

G1 *The Baby Who Wouldn't Go to Bed*

G1 *Down by the River*

G1 *OOPS!*

Quality of Literature

A3 *Love, Ghosts & Nose Hair*

A3 *Peeling the Onion*

C2 *Uncle Ronald*

G2 *The Tulip Touch*

N2 *The Other Side of Silence*

N2 *Junk* (1998)

The annotated bibliography below gives for each book a very brief review, publishing information, literary type, and the U.S. publication data for the non-U.S. books available in the United States.

1997 WINNERS/HONOR BOOKS/SHORTLISTED BOOKS FROM FIVE ENGLISH-SPEAKING COUNTRIES (IEA/SMH)

(A1) AUSTRALIA: PICTURE BOOK OF THE YEAR (Children's Book Council of Australia)

*Elizabeth Honey. *Not a Nibble!* Allen & Unwin. (ps-1) (US: Allen & Unwin, 1997) Susan, on holiday at beach, can't catch a fish, but her keen eyes are first to spot whales. (Realistic fiction)

Allan Baillie/Wayne Harris (ill.) *Dragon Quest*. Scholastic. Small boy, reading book, goes on imaginary quest with knight to face last dragon. (Fantasy)

Percy Mumbulla/Bronwyn Bancroft (ill.) *The Whalers*. HarperCollins. Aboriginal legend of whalers and friendly orcas is based on oral storytelling. (Legend)

Gillian Rubinstein/David Mackintosh (ill.) *Sharon, Keep Your Hair On!* Random House. Mason Jason, after marrying Sharon, builds on more floors as his household grows with children and relatives, and when children and relatives move out, he tears down some floors; then they ask to move back in! (Verse)

Margaret Wild/Ann James (ill.) *The Midnight Gang*. Omnibus Books. Baby Brenda and three other toddlers slip out at midnight for excitement and creep back undetected at sunrise. (Fantasy)

Ann Zamorano/Julie Vivas (ill.) *Let's Eat!* Omnibus Books. (ps-2) (US: Scholastic, 1997). When Mama serves big 2 o'clock meal, some family member always is missing—until Mama is missing and later returns with new baby. (Realistic fiction)

(A2) AUSTRALIA: BOOK OF THE YEAR—YOUNGER READERS
(Children's Book Council of Australia)

*Libby Gleeson/Ann James (ill.) *Hannah Plus One.* Penguin. Hannah, with parents' consent, names new sister Megen after imaginary sister, invented as defense against twin sisters. (Realistic fiction)

Pamela Freeman/Kim Gamble (ill.) *Victor's Quest.* Omnibus Books. Stupid Prince Victor, on horse smarter than he is, sets off to find a princess, and because of his kindness and politeness—plus help from his horse—he succeeds. (Fantasy)

Elizabeth Honey/William Clarke (ill.) *Don't Pat the Wombat.* Allen & Unwin. Mark and 50 classmates spend week at school camp, where intoxicated teacher picks on Mark's friend. (Realistic fiction)

Diana Kidd. *I Love You, Jason Delaney.* HarperCollins. Thirteen-year-old Ali's life is overshadowed by memory of Auntie Mim—and then she meets Jason Delaney. (Realistic fiction)

Robin Morrow (Compiler)/Stephen Michael King (ill.) *Beetle Soup.* Scholastic. This mostly humorous collection of Australian poems and short stories, many featuring Australian wildlife, is delightfully illustrated with colorful, comic-like pictures. (Verse/fantasy/realistic fiction)

Emily Rodda. *Rowan and the Keeper of the Crystal.* Omnibus Books. In third book about Rowan of Rin, set in prehistory, older Rowan becomes involved in selecting Keeper of Crystal and faces natural and supernatural dangers. (Fantasy)

(A3) AUSTRALIA: BOOK OF THE YEAR—OLDER READERS
(Children's Book Council of Australia)

*James Moloney. *A Bridge to Wiseman's Cove.* University of Queensland Press. Carl attempts to care for his lively 10-year-old brother after they are abandoned by mother, then older sister, and finally an aunt—and then they meet loving couple who need a son. (Realistic fiction)

Steven Herrick. *Love, Ghosts & Nose Hair.* University of Queensland Press. (International Specialized Book Services, 1996) This "verse novel" consists of 69 blank verse selections, few sad and few mature in themes, revealing feelings and actions of 16-year-old and others. (Verse/Realistic fiction)

Catherine Jinks. *Pagan's Scribe*. Omnibus Books. In this fourth and last book in Pagan series, set in 1209 amid religious unrest, 15-year-old Isidore, highly intelligent but subject to fits, becomes scribe to Archdeacon Pagan, easy to anger—but compassionate. (Historical fiction)

Victor Kelleher. *Fire Dancer*. Penguin. Twenty-first century Ivan and Josie are transported back to Neanderthal period and must adapt to Neanderthal lifestyle. (Fantasy)

David Metzenthen. *Johnny Hart's Heroes*. Penguin. Lal, 19, and her Aboriginal friend Ralph join Johnny Hart in trying to drive 2,000 sheep across barren bush country to escape drought—and become "heroes." (Realistic fiction)

Wendy Orr. *Peeling the Onion*. Allen & Unwin. (7-up) (Holiday, 1997) Anna, 17 and crippled for life from car accident, finds recovery like peeling layers of herself off until she reaches seeds for generating new life that tolerates her disability. (Realistic fiction)

(C1) CANADA: AMELIA FRANCES HOWARD GIBBON AWARD (Canadian Library Association)

*Paul Yee/Harvey Chan (ill.) *Ghost Train*. Groundwood. (1-5) (Groundwood, 1996) Young Chinese girl, through her painting, collects souls of Chinese workers who died in early North American railroad construction to carry them back home to China. (Fantasy/Historical fiction)

(C2) CANADA: BOOK OF THE YEAR FOR CHILDREN (Canadian Library Association)

*Brian Doyle. *Uncle Ronald*. Groundwood. (5-7) (Groundwood, 1997) Old Mickey, now 112 and can't remember what he ate at lunch, remembers clearly what happened 100 years ago when he went to live with kind Uncle Ronald to escape a vicious father. (Realistic fiction)

Joseph Romain. *The Wagner Whacker*. Vanwell. (Honor Book) Whack on head by old machine transports 12-year-old Matt back 60 years to 1928, where he learns much about baseball from ghost player of past. (Fantasy/historical fiction)

(G1) GREAT BRITAIN: KATE GREENAWAY MEDAL (Library Association—British)

*Helen Cooper. *The Baby Who Wouldn't Go to Bed*. Doubleday. (ps-up) (Doubleday, 1997) Baby avoids Mom and bed by zooming off in his little car until all around him want to sleep—and then so does baby; imaginative illustrations involving baby's toys enhance story. (Fantasy)

Elisabeth Beresford/Susan Field (ill.) *The Smallest Whale*. Orchard. (ps-up) Small whale, mistaking boat for its mother, runs aground, and villagers keep it alive until tide comes in so it can return to sea; story is based on real event. (Realistic fiction)

Ruth Brown. *The Tale of the Monstrous Toad*. Anderson Press. (k-up) Monstrous toad, disgustingly depicted in text and pictures, smiles monstrous smile at end of tale. (Fantasy)

Debi Gliori. *Mr. Bear to the Rescue*. Orchard. (ps-up) When storm destroys homes of his animal neighbors, Mr. Bear comes to the rescue. (Fantasy)

Grace Hallworth/Caroline Binch (ill.) *Down by the River*. Heinemann. (k-up) (Scholastic, 1996) Colorful, lifelike illustrations accompany collection of Afro-Caribbean rhymes, games and children's songs. (Verse)

Jonathan Long/Korky Paul (ill.) *The Duck That Had No Luck*. Bodely Head. (k-up) In delightful verse and humorous illustrations, tale is told of unlucky duck's attempt to fly south, only to end up elsewhere. (Verse/Fantasy)

Colin McNaughton. *OOPS!* Anderson Press. (k-up) (US: Harcourt, 1997) Humorous text and pictures tell this twisted version of Red Riding Hood with Preston in red and confused wolf who can't remember how story should unfold. (Fantasy)

Christopher Moore/Christina Balit (ill.) *Ishtar and Tammuz*. Frances Lincoln. (3-up) This retelling of ancient Babylonian myth about seasons incudes colorful pictures. (Myth)

(G2) GREAT BRITAIN: CARNEGIE MEDAL (Library Association—British)

*Melvin Burgess. *Junk*. Anderson Press. (10-up) This sad story, beginning when Tar and Gemma are 14, is about highs, lows, heartbreaks of drug addiction; the two teenagers, escaping from home situations for different reasons, experience squat living, begging, drug use, theft, pimping, prostitution, jail, detoxification, and parenthood. (Realistic fiction)

Michael Coleman. *Weirdo's War*. Orchard. (5-up) Bullied by three classmates and ridiculed by teacher, David (Weirdo), mathematical whiz but loner, proves resourceful when he, one of his tormentors, and teacher face near-tragic accident on school trip. (Realistic fiction)

Anne Fine. *The Tulip Touch*. Hamish Hamilton. (6-up) (US: Little, 1997) Natalie's friendship with her conniving, domineering classmate

Tulip, alienates her from other classmates, and when she attempts to break off relationship, Tulip carries out dangerous act of revenge, in this interestingly-told story. (Realistic fiction)

Elizabeth Laird. *Secret Friends*. Hodder. (3-4) Guilt and grief overwhelm Lucy when she discovers too late that she and her classmates should have been nicer to Rafaella. (Realistic fiction)

Terry Pritchell. *Johnny & the Bomb*. Corgi. (6-up) Five sometimes bumbling teenagers, with aid of baglady's trolley, shift in time from present back to wartime 1941 in their own British village; armed with historical knowledge, they attempt to save lives of villagers from what in 1941 was deadly German bombing. (Fantasy/Historical fiction)

Philip Pullman. *Clockwork*. Doubleday. (3-6) As the storyteller begins his tale of horror, tale takes on life of its own and unfolds like clockwork, in this fantasy set in Germany "once upon a time" and told with touch of horror. (Fantasy)

Chloe Raybean. *Love in Cyberia*. Bodely Head. (6-up) Present-day Justine follows Los (from year 3001) back to time when her mother was hippy teenager, in this humorous time-warp story—and it's all managed by computer! (Fantasy)

Jaqueline Wilson. *Bad Girls*. Doubleday. (3-up) Three "bad girls" make Mandy's school life miserable; for while, new best friend helps alleviate pain—until Mandy learns that best friend has problem. (Realistic fiction)

(N1) NEW ZEALAND: RUSSELL CLARK AWARD (Illustration)
(New Zealand Library & Information Association)

*Amanda Jackson/Murray Grimsdale (ill.) *George's Monster*. Learning Media. George, while spending night at Nanny's, is frightened by monster on roof; Nanny helps him understand that "monster" is possum party on roof. Characters are Maori. (Realistic fiction)

Jennifer Beck/Robin Belton (ill.) *The Bantam and the Soldier*. Scholastic. Young World War I soldier "adopts" bantam he found in battle area, and bantam becomes mascot for troops. Striking watercolor illustrations accompany text. (Historical fiction)

Joy Cowley/Tracey Moroney (ill.) *Nicketty-Nacketty: Noo-noo-noo*. Scholastic. In this humorous tale in verse, a wee wishy woman saves herself from ogre by feeding him stew cooked with glue. Humorous, colorful pictures add to story. (Verse/Fantasy)

Jane Buxton/Karen Opatt (ill.) *Far Away Moon*. Learning Media. In 10 sentences and colorful illustrations, basic information about

moon is given by child narrator in this beginning-level science book. (Information)

Robert Sullivan/Chris Slane (ill.) *Maui: Legends of the Outcast*. Godwit. In unique graphic style, this myth tells of outcast Maui's battle with nature. (Legend)

(N2) NEW ZEALAND: ESTHER GLEN AWARD (New Zealand Library & Information Association)

*Kate De Goldi. *Sanctuary*. Penguin. Cat, who has long avoided facing truth, is helped by psychiatrist to unravel truths of her past: her boyfriend Jem, Jem's treacherous brother Simieon, her unpredictable mother, and her own actions and guilt. (Realistic fiction)

David Catran. *The Onager*. HarperCollins. Set in 21st century, tale is mixture of high tech and appeal for ozone layer protection. (Science fiction)

Jack Lasenby. *The Battle of Pook Island*. Longacre. Five young Maoris, the Sedden Street Gang, battle rival Milk Street gang. 1930s setting. (Realistic fiction)

Margaret Mahy. *The Other Side of Silence*. Penguin. (7-up) (US: Viking, 1996) Twelve-year-old Hero, voluntarily mute for several years, lives life divided into "real" and "true," and uses writing as therapy. (Realistic fiction)

Jane Westaway. *Reliable Friendly Girls*. Longacre. Teenage problems, ranging from personal relations with peers or parents to pregnancy, are focus of 12 short stories in book. (Realistic fiction)

(U1) UNITED STATES: CALDECOTT MEDAL (American Library Association)

*David Wisniewski. *Golem*. Clarion. (1-5) In words and colorful illustrations, this version of old Jewish legend is set in Prague in late 1500s, time of religious and ethnic conflicts. (Legend/Historical fiction)

Minfong Ho/Holly Meade (ill.) *Hush! A Thai Lullaby*. Orchard. (ps-1) (Honor Book) In repetitive verse and lightly humorous illustrations, Mother cautions insects and animals to avoid waking sleeping baby. (Verse)

David Pelletier. *The Graphic Alphabet*. Orchard. (All ages) (Honor Book) Each letter is graphically illustrated—from crumbling A (Avalanche) to Z (Zig Zag). (Information)

Dav Pilkey. *The Paperboy*. Orchard. (ps-5) (Honor Book) Young black paperboy bicycles, in early morning to deliver Saturday paper, then goes home to still-warm bed. (Realistic fiction)

Peter Sis. *Starry Messenger*. Farrar. (1-up) (Honor Book) In pictures, Sis's commentary, and Galileo's words, Galileo's explanation of Universe and Church's reaction to it are told. (Biography)

(U2) UNITED STATES: NEWBERY MEDAL (American Library Association)

*E.L. Konigsburg. *The View from Saturday*. Atheneum. (3-7) Sixth-grade teacher didn't know why she picked the four members of her Academic Bowl team, but four "short stories," one on each member of team, reveal why they know what they know and why they work so well together. (Realistic fiction)

Nancy Farmer. *A Girl Named Disaster*. Orchard. (6-up) (Honor Book) Eleven-year-old Nhamo, to escape relative-planned marriage to older man, slips away to Zimbabwe to find father she has never seen. (Fantasy)

Eloise McGraw. *The Moorchild*. McElderry. (4-7) (Honor Book) Changeling (half-human, half "folk") has difficulty adjusting as human after banishment from folk home in exchange for human baby. (Fantasy)

Megan Whalen Turner. *The Thief*. Greenwillow. (5-up) (Honor Book) Young Gin, talented thief living in fictitious country long ago, is released from prison by King's Scholar to steal gem protected by Gods. (Fantasy)

Ruth White. *Belle Prater's Boy*. Farrar. (7-up) (Honor Book) Belle Prater's boy Woodroe and cousin Gypsy, each having lost a parent, help each other face loss. (Realistic fiction)

NOTES: Winners listed first and starred. Grade-levels given for those where located in *Books in Print* and in selected issues of *Publishers Weekly*. Information on books from other countries published in United States from same two sources.

1997 Contenders/Winners: Children's Book Awards in Five English-Speaking Countries: A Reaction and a Retrospective Appreciation for a Body of Work

Nelly Hecker

Nearly two decades ago, Aaron and Hutchinson began to bring high quality children's literature published in other English-speaking countries to our attention. Their collaboration began before technologies for quick retrieval of information and web sites were available world-wide; it began before many children's books published in other countries reached our American shores. Hutchinson and Aaron have traveled, selected, and purchased hundreds of books. They have evaluated and, most importantly, have shared a gold mine of information with many of us. In turn, we have followed their conference presentations and read their articles which appeared in a number of publications. We have been inspired to read quality literature that reflects cultural diversity and, as a result, have a greater understanding of other people and their rich heritage.

What is remarkable about the many presentations made by Aaron and Hutchinson—and this year's presentation at the meeting of the American Reading Forum was no exception—is that we never tire of listening and learning. We look forward, in fact, to their sessions—a blend of incisive commentary precisely organized and the good humor and delightful side stories which characterize their collaborations.

For this year's presentation, "1997 Contenders/winners: Children's book awards in five English-speaking countries," Aaron and Hutchinson once again discussed outstanding current literature, presented historical trends in awards within and across countries, reported on availability in the United States of titles from Australia, Canada, Great Britain, and New Zealand, and provided participants with a carefully annotated bibliography. This bibliography is a must-have handout for those of us involved in the process of ordering books for our universities and school libraries and for those seeking to balance their library collections with quality literature that reflects a variety of cultures.

When I asked Sylvia Hutchinson and Ira Aaron about their first attempts at collecting and reviewing award-winning books published in English-speaking countries other than the United States, they seemed somewhat surprised. Their casual response indicated that they had not directed much of their thinking to the number of years and the amount of work they had devoted to securing and reading children's books. On the contrary, the reading of quality literature and the contact with individuals who recommended books or helped them add titles to their collections were the focus of their comments. Ira Aaron, in fact, had to check old calendars and income tax forms so he could give me accurate dates of travel to New Zealand and Australia; Sylvia Hutchinson described the rooms filled with bookshelves from floor to ceiling where perhaps the most extensive collection of quality books for children published in English outside the United States is housed. Their stories told of funny and not so funny encounters with the postal service; the excitement of receiving and reading books clearly marked their comments and experiences.

Who has benefited from so much knowledge and systematic study of children's literature? All of us in the American Reading Forum and many people across the world.

Data collection in the form of general information about books began nearly twenty years ago for Hutchinson and Aaron. Book buying and transporting to the United States for serious reviewing, annotation, presentation, and publication date back to 1986. In collaboration and individually, their record of presentations is impressive. Presentations at meetings of the American Reading Forum in 1990, 1993, 1995, and 1997, and at Annual Conventions of the International Reading Association in 1987, 1989, 1990, 1992, 1994, 1996, and 1998—have brought books from other English-speaking countries to the attention of educators mostly from the United States. Presentations at World Congresses in 1988 (Queensland, Australia), 1992 (Maui, Hawaii), 1994 (Buenos Aires, Argentina), 1996 (Prague,

Czechoslovakia), and 1998 (Ocho Rios, Jamaica)—have brought titles to the attention of the international community.

In the United States, participants at IRA state and local council meetings in Georgia, South Carolina, Ohio, and Louisiana have learned from Hutchinson and Aaron's research and careful analysis of the literature. Articles and book chapters reflecting their research and highlighting books which are culturally appropriate and representative of life in different countries of the English-speaking world have been included in issues *of The Reading Teacher* (Aaron & Hutchinson, 1993), *The Yearbook of the American Reading Forum* (Aaron & Hutchinson, 1991, 1996), and *Invitation to read: More children's literature in the reading program* (Hutchinson & Aaron, 1992).

Love for children's books first brought Aaron and Hutchinson's long-standing project into focus. Their enduring appreciation and respect for cultural differences have called attention to a bigger issue—the need to be familiar with books likely to extend understanding of cultures different from our own. Teachers and teacher educators who know literature from various cultures will include representative selections in their classroom collections. The books included in these collections will help their students experience the world in a more realistic way.

For years of sharing different cultures and outstanding writings and for opening doors that stood to remain closed for a long time, we thank you, Ira E. Aaron and Sylvia M. Hutchinson.

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Finding Our Literacy Roots: Teachers' Storytelling Stories

Reed R. Mottley, Richard Telfer

The importance of students coming to school prepared to learn has been identified as a critical factor in improving students' success in school. Goals 2000 (U.S. Department of Education, 1993), in particular, has highlighted this issue. A central issue in being prepared to learn is the development of an understanding of oral language. Many educators (Gillard, 1996; Greene, 1996; Livo, 1983; Peck, 1989; Strickland & Morrow, 1989; Trousdale, 1990; Williams, 1991) have emphasized the value of storytelling as a means of developing both understanding of oral language and a sense of story. These authors note that storytelling helps prepare preschoolers and students in formal classrooms to learn, both prior to entering school and during formal schooling.

While storytelling can potentially be very valuable in fostering children's learning, storytelling is used sparingly by many teachers. Prospective teachers, while they indicate that they have been exposed to storytelling in and out of school, express apprehension and reluctance to use storytelling themselves (Mottley & Telfer, 1997).

In an attempt to explore ways to help prospective teachers learn to be comfortable with and use storytelling as a regular part of their instruction, this study pursued insights from teachers who regularly use storytelling as part of their instruction. The method used was a semi-structured interview with the storytelling teachers, having them talk, or essentially tell stories, about their own storytelling activities.

Objectives

This study examined storytelling by seven experienced teachers who were interviewed about how they became storytellers; their stories about storytelling served as the basis for the project. Specifically, the study was designed to address the following three goals:

1. To explore with experienced teachers their overall development as storytellers.

2. To compare the teachers' development as storytellers and identify common features, if any.

3. To learn about how these teachers use storytelling in their instruction.

Perspectives or Theoretical Framework

In the past few years, much has been written about the literacy-related benefits of storytelling. Particularly with young children, storytelling assists in the development of general language facility. Upon this foundation, storytelling can help to build listening and reading comprehension skills. While storytelling and its benefits seem focused on young children, storytelling can also play an important role with older students. This role may include facilitating learning of specific subject content as well as helping students address complex issues. In addition, storytelling is even suggested as a way of understanding teachers' thinking and actions. Finally, storytelling seems to be an effective and enjoyable way to learn.

Storytelling is often recommended as a means of enhancing children's language and literacy development (e.g., Kalfus & Van Der Schyff, 1996; Peck, 1989). Isbell (1979) and Raines and Isbell (1994) found that storytelling was particularly successful in promoting language development. Isbell even found evidence that storytelling was more effective than reading aloud. Strickland and Morrow (1989) noted that storytelling helps foster growth in language and identified a connection between storytelling and reading development. Trousdale (1990) emphasized the use of storytelling as a way to help children gain confidence in their own oral language abilities. Other authors (Applebee, 1978; Cooper, 1989; Hicks, 1990) have suggested similar language and literacy benefits.

Storytelling helps improve listening and reading comprehension. Greene (1991) noted that storytelling improves listening skills, which

are directly linked to reading achievement. Applebee (1978) observed that storytelling enhances retention of information. Delano (1977) found that storytelling improves language comprehension.

In addition to literacy-related benefits, storytelling helps many students learn course content more effectively. Students who may have difficulty learning through lecture and discussion may find that they learn the same content more easily with the use of stories. For example, Pierce (1996) described the benefits of storytelling within a social studies classroom. Anderson (1995) and Preston (1991) suggested using storytelling in solving mathematics problems. Knox (1997) explained a way of reforming the traditional lecture through the use of storytelling in a college science course.

Storytelling can be used to help students and teachers address complex issues. Tappan and Brown (1989) gave an example when they related the use of a narrative approach to moral development. In this example, storytelling became an important element in moral education.

Storytelling has the power to help us understand more about what individuals are thinking and why they act the way they do. Ornstein (1995), for example, discussed the use of narrative and storytelling as a means of better understanding teachers' thinking and actions. Gillard (1996) modeled this approach in her book, where she argued for the power of storytelling by telling her story.

Storytelling is also a natural medium for learning that can make learning enjoyable and effective (Zemke, 1990). That storytelling is a natural way of learning may trace back to oral traditions in many cultures (Trahant, 1996). Storytelling is enjoyable in part because the storyteller can use a wide range of skills and abilities to communicate and the audience can respond in a variety of ways (Roney, 1996).

The literature on storytelling highlights the benefits to be gained from the use of storytelling as an instructional tool. In addition, a number of books (e.g., Farrell, 1991; Greene, 1996; Livo & Reitz, 1986) are available to show teachers how to incorporate storytelling into their teaching. However, relatively few teachers use storytelling as a regular feature of their instruction. This study is an attempt to examine both how storytelling how storytellers develop and how they use storytelling in their instruction.

Methods

In this study, seven teachers who were identified as using storytelling in their teaching were interviewed by the researchers. A semi-structured interview format was used. Each teacher met one-on-one with a researcher to answer a series of questions about their use of storytelling and their growth and development as storytellers. The questions were selected by the researchers to provide structure for a discussion of both the individual's development as a storyteller and the individual's use of storytelling. The interviews were tape recorded, so the researchers and the teachers could focus on the discussion.

The semi-structured interviews centered around the following four questions: (a) What are your earliest recollections of telling stories? (b) How and from whom did you learn to tell stories? (c) What types of stories do you tell? (d) How do you connect storytelling to instructional goals in the classroom? While the structure of the interviews involved these four questions, teachers were encouraged to elaborate on their answers and to pose their own areas of concern. In essence, the interviews began with the questions and became "stories" about the teachers' own storytelling.

Data Analysis and Results

The responses from the seven teachers in the study were tape-recorded. The recorded interviews were then transcribed for analysis by one of the researchers. The researchers then read over each of the transcripts for clarity and accuracy; some light editing was done to insure clarity.

For analysis, each researcher read the transcribed responses to each of the four interview questions independently. Then, each researcher identified "representative" comments from each interviewee for each question. The representative comments were selected on the basis of responsiveness to the question and clarity. Together, the researchers identified from those representative comments brief comments to report. Disagreements between the researchers were discussed and resolved.

General categories of responses to each question emerged from the transcripts. These general categories were agreed upon by the researchers. The general categories are described in the overviews that precede the teachers' comments about each question.

Teachers' Backgrounds

So that a better picture of the interviewed teachers could be obtained, the researchers asked each teacher to talk a little bit about his/her teaching experience. This gave a common starting place for the interviews which helped put the teachers' responses to the interview questions into perspective.

The teachers are all experienced, with from six to more than thirty years in education. The teachers currently teach or have taught in public and/or private schools, including preschools, elementary schools, middle schools, high schools, junior colleges, universities, and Indian reservations. They teach or have taught subjects or areas that include preschool, kindergarten, elementary grades, social studies, English, business education, physical education, mathematics, and reading. One teacher had served as a vice principal of a school.

The seven teachers included three whose experience has been mainly at the preschool and/or elementary level and four whose experience has been mainly at the middle school and/or high school level. Many of the teachers have had junior college or college-level teaching experience as well.

In general the teachers have a high level of formal education. All have bachelor's and master's degrees. Two have Ph.D.'s. In addition, three are currently working on either doctorates or specialist's degrees.

What Are Your Earliest Recollections of Storytelling?

The teachers were asked to describe their earliest recollections of telling stories. Responses to this question varied. While most discussed telling stories in the context of teaching, two specifically recalled telling stories as a child. One teacher recalled telling stories in scouting activities while another saw storytelling as something done among high school friends.

Most of the teachers, however, described storytelling as something that was done in their roles as teachers. In fact, three of the teachers saw storytelling as something that became a necessity once they started teaching. Teacher #3's comment was "I started telling stories when we ran out of books." For Teacher #6 storytelling helped students develop language skills, language skills that were missing when they came to school. "I would use storytelling to motivate them, to give them an parallel, an example. When they hear it and they can see somebody relating it personally, they feel more comfortable with it. They can make that connection."

Table 1 contains brief responses to the first question from each of the seven teachers. These responses were taken from the teachers' responses during the interview and edited for clarity and responsiveness to the question. To the extent possible, the responses are in the teachers' own words.

Table 1

Selected Early Recollections of Storytelling

Teacher #1

It's only been a few years. It's probably been within the last four or five years. Usually I would tell stories in the sense of if you're studying characters in history, you'll tell stories about those characters to try to make your subject interesting. It's only been really within recent years that I've added music and found that music is a great motivator. It turns people on that normally will sit there and just kind of stare out into space. Start firing up some music and they'll start tapping their feet, and they'll start humming a little bit.

Teacher #2

My earliest recollection of telling stories would be long before the classroom because I think that I tell lots of stories in creating relationships and communicating with friends. I can remember as a young person in high school, one of the favorite things of my group of friends was to gather at somebody's house and talk. Ultimately what those sessions turned into were storytelling sessions because we'd do lots of recalling of things we had done together. So I really consider that probably the earliest storytelling that I did.

Teacher #3

I started telling stories when we ran out of books. I went to a school that had a very limited school library. I was a beginning teacher on a very small salary and I didn't have enough money to bring my own personal collection of books into the classroom right away. I resorted to telling stories, old classics, and embellishing them in various ways. More and more I realized that retelling is a valid way to check children's understanding of literacy and so I began to encourage children to retell the story that I had just told them or I had just read to them. They would take turns retelling it in various ways and we would think of new endings for stories

Teacher #4

Well, I guess I've been telling stories since I began teaching. It was always real innate in me to describe my family and my life and experiences I've had to young children, just helping them know me and me get to know them. I've over the years came to regard it as very valuable in forming a community in the classroom because the more I told the more interested they became in me and the more open they become in telling me stories about themselves.

Teacher #5

I guess the earliest times I would have been telling stories would have been maybe through the Boy Scouts or Cub Scouts on campfires when we took turns telling stories and doing skits and that sort of thing. In the classroom at the secondary level I used a lot (of storytelling). Where I taught there's a lot of first nations or native students and in that community there's a lot of oral tradition and I used a lot of the native legends and stories. I used those in my social studies class to try to link what we were covering in the curriculum to the native students that were in my class and to teach the other students from a different ethnic backgrounds about how natives record their history through the oral tradition.

Teacher #6

(I began telling stories on) Day one.

Researcher: Can you tell me a little more?

Well, these kids that I taught really didn't have a grasp of language skills. I mean they could talk to one another, but when they got in the classroom it was (a) totally different situation. I would use storytelling to motivate them, to give them a parallel, an example. When they hear it and they can see somebody relating it personally, they feel more comfortable with it. They can make that connection, whereas in a book it's not quite the same. (If) you make that sort of common ground, that secure place, then when we get to a book, they can go back to their own stories and connect with it.

Teacher #7

When I actually told stories would be in those honors English classes back in Greensboro, North Carolina. I told stories right from the beginning of my teaching career.

How and from whom did you learn to tell stories?

The second question asked teachers to discuss how and from whom they learned to tell stories. Most commonly, the teachers indicated that they learned within their families; six of the seven indicated they learned from parents, grandparents, or even great grandparents. Three teachers also referred to one or more of their teachers who were especially effective models.

At the same time, none of the teachers referred to any kind of formal or systematic training in storytelling. In fact, two specifically noted that they did not have mentors or models as such.

Several teachers made comments about how a storyteller who had a "gift" or a "knack." They also noted that a particular family member or teacher used storytelling to make a subject come alive.

Table 2 contains responses to the second question: How and from whom did you learn to tell stories? Again, these responses are in the teachers' words and edited for clarity.

Table 2

How and From Whom Storytelling was Learned

Teacher #1

I don't think I really modeled after anybody. I just think years ago I had an interest in writing some lyrics and I began to write lyrics, and found out that I had a knack for doing that.

Teacher #2

I'd have to say the person whose stories I enjoyed listening to as a child were my grandfather's stories. He impressed me as a storyteller from a child's viewpoint more than anyone else.

I really don't remember having any elementary teachers who told stories. I remember having a fifth grade teacher who read aloud to us a great deal. When I got in to high school I had a 9th grade English teacher, an African-American lady, who was a great storyteller. She was just absolutely fascinating. She taught literature primarily to us in that particular term, but she was a great storyteller.

Teacher #3

I learned by listening (to my mother. Her family told) stories or they retold stories. They told family (stories). She had such an incredible sense (of story). It was not something she had any specific training in, she had a natural gift. She also sang to me. She would incorporate song into (her stories). So, when my budget was so limited in my beginning years of teaching, as a strategy to deal with oral tradition, (I followed an) enjoyable entertaining model that my mother and her relatives had set up for me.

Teacher #4

I didn't have one person that was a mentor in storytelling, but all my life my family has told stories. I'm sure it is like every other child. I asked my parents about how they met and heard stories about those experiences and what things were like when they were younger.

My grandfather was a great storyteller and loved telling things about his past. I suppose that's where it started.

Teacher #5

Probably the first time I remember telling stories would have been in Boy Scouts at campfires where we'd take turns and do these activities. I spent a lot of time prior to that with my grandfather who fought in the First World War and was a historian. That's where I first developed some interest in history, and I spent a lot of time with him as a young man, in my elementary school days. That's the basis for my (interest in) history. He would tell me story after story about his days in the war and then he actually did some writing. He would read the stories to me that he was writing. So I had an interest sort of ingrained in me at a very young age.

Teacher #6

I was read to at an early age, by my mother and by my father to some degree. I was always told ghost stories by my father and these little anecdotes. There was always a twinkle in his eye, like is this the truth or isn't it? I think one of the biggest moments was in the fifth grade. I had a teacher that was taking the place of another teacher and we really didn't want her, but (ultimately) we loved her. She read *Charlotte's Web* to us. There was something about that moment in that classroom that I remember so well.

I had some teachers that knew their subject matter so well, they gave me this information in English or history or education. They told it in such a way that it became a story. It was not, here's some facts, eat these and then regurgitate them. It's, let me tell you how this is connected, let me tell you the history of it. They told it in a story, as if they were sitting somewhere around a campfire. I know this sounds a little trite, but you take it in more that way, and they were great storytellers of the truth.

Teacher #7

Well, a lot of people deserve credit for that I guess, but I remember distinctly my great grandparents on my father's side. They were great storytellers. And my grandparents on both sides of the family were big time storytellers. I can remember my grandfather on my mother's side not only told lots of stories, but sometimes would play the guitar some and tell stories, a range of stories from family stories to stories that he made up. He would just try to entertain us. Some of them scared the daylights out of us, those ghost stories that he told.

What Types of Stories Do You Tell?

When asked the types of stories that they tell, the teachers responded with a wide variety of types. Three identified stories as original or personal experience-based. Two mentioned classic children's stories. One mentioned the Bible. Another mentioned local stories. One specifically mentioned an emphasis on a moral or a point to be made through the stories. In addition, one of the teachers identified himself as a song writer as opposed to a storyteller; he tended to tell his stories through song.

In the context of discussing the types of stories that they told, several teachers also discussed how they prepared to tell stories. Most of the teachers suggested that they somehow prepared a story before they told it, referring to some type of a collection of stories that they told, a repertoire of possible stories. At the same time, one teacher suggested that her best stories were unplanned, off the top of her head.

Table 3 contains brief responses to Question 3: What types of stories do you tell? These responses are edited from longer responses, but the teachers' words are preserved.

Table 3

Types of Stories that are Told

Teacher #1

Most all of my songs will focus around the Bible and so most all of my stories will have very strong Christian leaning. They'll be focused on values, being right with God, living a good life. Of course, on the other hand, I do write when I read a good story or I hear a good story; they make good lyrics. As I read good children's books, many times if I'm inspired to write the lyrics. In recent years I've taken some good pieces of children's literature and I've written songs to go along with them. So as we're sharing the piece of literature, showing how you can use literature to teach social studies, we also expand that so we can also use music to teach social studies at the same time.

Teacher #2

I have told personal experience stories, very often to older students. My earliest stories that I told were personal experience stories and then I think as I worked with children, I probably developed a repertoire of folk tales and funny stories, traditional kinds of stories that children like to hear.

Teacher #3

I retold the classics that you would think of as typically early childhood. And then I began to realize that if you tell stories, young children can get the story line even if you're telling them stories that had traditionally been thought of as adult stories, so I began to retell Shakespearean plays and I told *Treasure Island* where the first and second graders were certainly not capable of reading the story. And they didn't have an attention span that would let me sit down and read for the long periods of time that it would take to complete the story. But I could tell the story and be up moving around and gesturing and using facial expressions and different voice tones. So I could tell those stories and have them incorporate that into their database of literature and ideas about life where I couldn't read those stories to them as effectively.

Teacher #4

Stories come to mind off the top of my head. Many times they are unplanned and they just happen in the classroom and I'll tell a story that relates to something that's going on in the classroom. More than likely it's about my children, because my classroom children seem to just love to identify with them and to call them by name. I'll tell many stories about them and I'll confess I do embellish a little bit.

I have on occasion gone to hear a storyteller, or at a conference gone to hear something on storytelling, and I worked to learn a story to tell. But always my best stories are just ones that happen spontaneously, just part of my family and background and part of my life so that they come real natural, although it is important to me to keep increasing the kinds of stories by learning stories to tell.

Teacher #5

One story I like to tell is in Nova Scotia where I'm from. There's an area in Nova Scotia called Five Islands, which are inhabited by a large native community and there's a great native legend about how the five islands were created. And there was actually a giant native god who got very angry one time and was grabbing parts of the dirt and throwing them into the ocean out of anger. I use that story a lot, I use it to help maybe through some conflict resolution. You know he didn't kill anybody or hurt anybody, he grabbed something that was inanimate and threw it where it couldn't hurt anybody into the ocean, instead of taking his frustrations out on somebody else. So I use it for a number of different reasons. I guess that would be the one specific story I like to tell.

Teacher #6

Everything. I tell everything from those moral stories to here's a concept through this story, to here's how you make mistakes and look for these things, because here's how this person in this story made this bad connection. For example, history, etymology of words, just anything, everything. It's just a good way to connect.

Teacher #7

Most of my stories are original stories and in my files I've counted that there are somewhere between 75 to 100 stories and if you were to classify them you would classify them into tall tales, a few folk tales, ghost stories, and personal anecdotes that range from the more humorous to the serious side. I tell lots of family stories. These would be the primary types.

How Do You Connect Storytelling To Instructional Goals in the Classroom?

The fourth question focused on connecting storytelling to instructional goals in the classroom. All of the teachers answered this question directly and tended to elaborate on their answers. The responses for some included reference to specific subjects or themes that could be learned through storytelling. Here they referred to such areas as social studies concepts, the family, and native culture.

For other teachers, the responses included specific skills and abilities that could be enhanced through storytelling. Here the teachers mentioned listening skills, inferencing, and knowledge of story structure. In addition, they noted that storytelling could improve motivation in students.

Table 4 contains relatively brief responses to Question 4: How do you connect storytelling to instructional goals in the classroom? Because of the nature of the question, the responses are somewhat longer than the responses to earlier questions. These responses, like the earlier ones, are in the teachers' words and lightly edited.

Table 4

Connecting Storytelling to Instructional Goals

Teacher #1

Connecting this with the use of social studies, I've written a song I call "I will always love you forever." it's original lyrics, but it's based on the same theme that's told in this particular story and so you can see the parallel. After you've sung the song and told the story, like a good storyteller you might elaborate on some of the concepts and some of the themes that you're trying to teach when you tell a good story.

Teacher #2

Well, to make a point. I think that my students relate more to what I'm saying if I can put it in personal terms. I guess some aspects of it I can make the information a little more palatable, a little more entertaining, if I put it into story form. They tend to remember the ideas and the theories that I relate to my own personal experiences.

Because I thought that many of (a guest storyteller's) stories kindergarten children could relate to and the stories fit in very well with times when we were talking with children about families, I could sort of key off of (the guest) coming and telling stories about his family, encouraging children to find out stories from their families and then share them with the class. Frequently I had parents to come in and they would often tell stories and it's a good way for me to connect.

In my (college level) behavior class that I teach now, I use lots of stories to get my students to really reflect on their own beliefs to sort of think about where they've come from and what their feelings are about children and themselves and how they related to children and what their expectations are. I find that when I'm very open and honest in telling stories about my family and how I grew up and what my beliefs are or were and where they came from, then my students become very open in telling stories about their childhood. And it's really crucial in that situation that those prospective teachers come to grips with some of the things that happened to them as children in order to better relate to the children they are going to work with every day.

Teacher #3

It became evident as I was teaching them writing and the story elements that if I gave them a recipe for what needs to go into a story, they could create a story. They could either tell it or they could write it. I start with five year olds with telling that every story has a main character and that there might be differing opinions about who might be the main character was. So we analyze stories that I read out loud to them or tell them and find out who the main character is and then I tell them that every main character has a problem or there wouldn't be a story, wouldn't be anything interesting to say. If they can pick out those in already created stories then sometimes they can eventually create those for themselves and sometimes we do group stories. One child will

think of a main character, another child will think of a problem, another child will think of a solution to the story.

Researcher: How do your stories connect to your instructional goals in the classroom?

Originally, they didn't connect, to my knowledge. But as I began to read more and more about authentic literature and holistic instruction as opposed to skills specific, I began to realize that this was very much an authentic way to have children internalize (their understandings). That became part of our writers' workshop.

Teacher #4

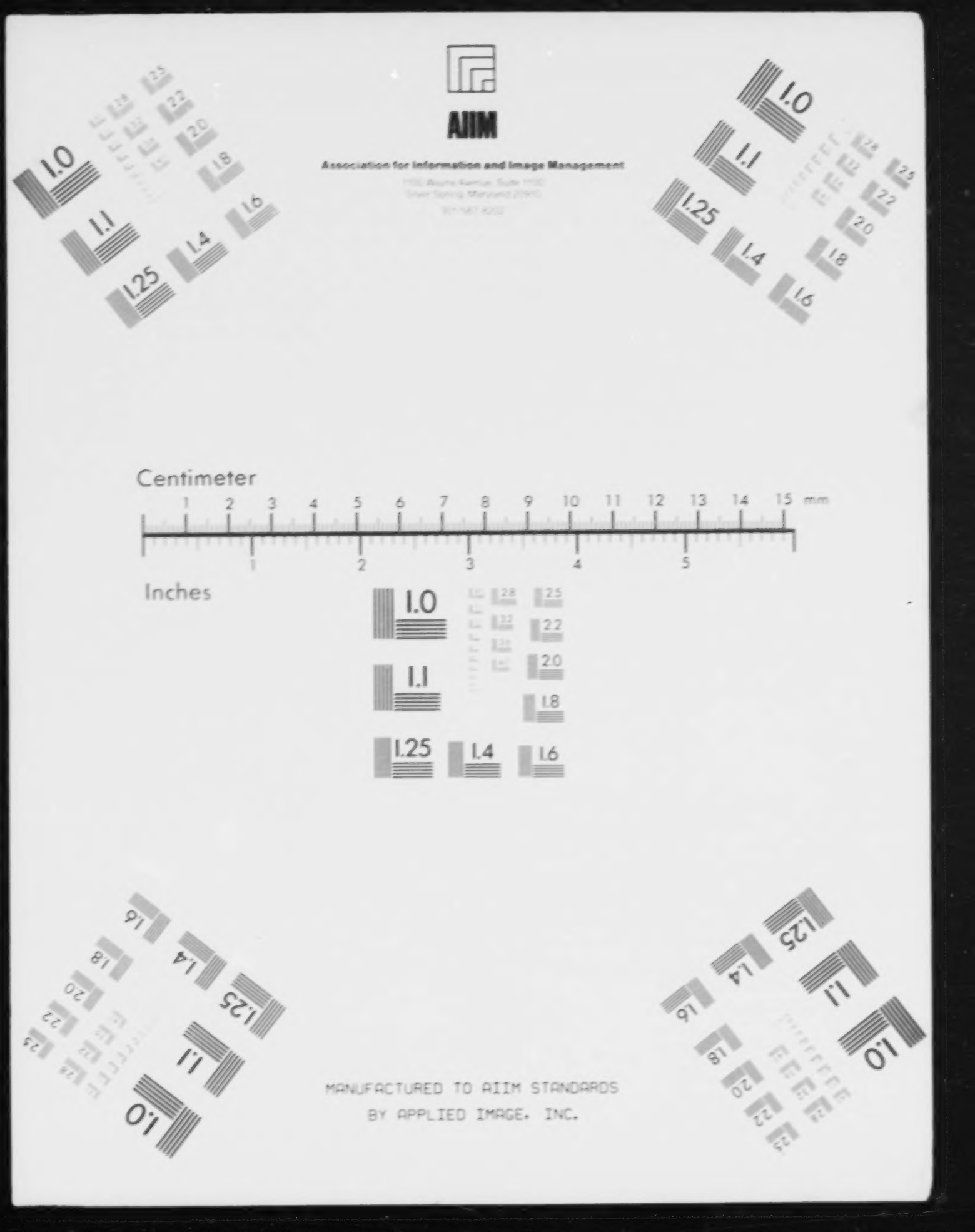
I (retell stories) a lot with young children. Children love the repetition of hearing the same stories over and over again, and when they do latch on to a certain story, at some time I always put the book away and just tell it. And they are telling it with me as much as I'm telling it to them and I'll really get into embellishing those stories and letting them see the flexibility of language and how the storyteller can make it up as he goes along and change things and helps them really develop a strong story sense and a sense of owning a story and creating parts of stories on their own.

In young children, their form of literacy when they come to us is mainly verbal. So to latch onto that sense of them telling each other and telling me and me telling, I've got to build on the idea that we read what we say and we write what we say.

Well, I suppose if I'm going to pin myself down to certain goals, and I don't think these through when I get ready to tell a story necessarily, I think the telling of stories really contributes to the sense of community in my classroom. Before I can teach anything I've got to have that sense of commonality and community and caring for one another. Stories can bring us together into one focus so easily. But they also, like I said before, create a sense of story. Not all children come with ability to just tell things sequentially, and so to build up that sense of story in them and sense of progression and building up.

Teacher #5

I guess at the elementary level, when I was a vice principal, and was teaching social studies, we had a lot of native students at the elementary level and we would do a lot of native art in the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classroom. That's part of our curriculum. We do one lesson on how to make button blankets. A lot of native people have ceremonial blankets and they decorate them with lots of buttons and different pictures and drawings that are related to their clan. We like to either tell ourselves as teachers or bring in elder native persons and they tell legends and stories while the children are working on these art projects dealing with native culture. So we try to sort of hit them with hands on and also some listening skills, as well as learning some native culture and background of the local area. So there's lots of different ways to link it to the curriculum. It's wonderful for teaching. Storytelling is a wonderful tool to teach different cultures and different backgrounds.

My storytelling in class is because I'm a social studies instructor in a community with a lot of native students and I try to involve that in my class to make it link to their culture, to make them more involved in my classroom.

Teacher #6

One of my instructional goals is that the kids nowadays don't read as much, overall. They don't know how to infer. If you can tell them a story, they can listen to stories. When they listen to stories, they're making decisions. They're making connections with experiences to this story. They're actually inferring there. They don't see that as what they do in reading, and when you can make the connection with a story that's being told and then apply it to a piece of literature that they're reading or a science assignment or a math question. They do the same thing there, they just don't see it as that. And that's what that storytelling does. It shows them that the structure is the same.

Teacher #7

There are certain stories that I tell from the types that I've just mentioned I think that will motivate others to read a particular type of novel or picture story book or other literature, and more specifically some of the stories that I tell are connected with another key interest area of mine, and that is bibliotherapy. So some of the stories that I tell I think could be connected to some of the instructional goals pertaining to bibliotherapy, teaching others to how to cope with crises in their lives like divorce or death. Many times I tell stories to encourage others to tell, to become storytellers because it is a motivational tool as far as literacy is concerned and reading and writing in particular.

> When I tell stories in the festivals and in some of the seminars and even in my classes, it appears that you build a rapport with your students here in the college level in a way that the college students see that you are a little bit more human and they get to see a side of you that they might not have seen had you just been a textbook teacher or a lecture-oriented and by-the-book (teacher). That storytelling somehow humanizes the relationship that you have as a professor, college professor with the college students. And when they open up I think they become better communicators and work harder for you in other areas.

Discussion

This study looked at the stories teachers tell about storytelling. Specifically, the research involved interviewing seven teachers who use storytelling in their teaching. The stories told in the interviews were analyzed to better understand how storytellers develop and to see if there were common threads across the teachers.

The responses indicated that a number of factors seem to impact the development of storytellers. For this group of teachers, necessity seems to have been a common factor. At least three of the teachers saw storytelling as something that was required in their particular teaching situations. One cited a lack of books; another cited the students' weak background.

Another common factor was a family background in which stories were told. Most of the teachers mentioned learning to tell stories within their families. Less often, but still frequently, teachers mentioned a particular teacher who told stories.

The teachers indicated that they told a widely variety range of stories, although several mentioned personal experience stories. So a focus on personal experience stories may be a common thread.

A final common factor is the view of storytelling as connected with instructional goals. Although the goals varied, the teachers were consistent in seeing storytelling as an important tool for achieving instructional goals. The teachers saw storytelling as important for developing understandings about specific subjects or themes such as social studies, the family, and native culture. They also saw a place for storytelling in enhancing specific skills and abilities, including listening skills, inferencing, and story structure. In addition, they saw storytelling as a motivational tool.

Even though there seem to be common factors in the development of these storytellers, a part of the development of storytellers is quite individual. In the descriptions provided by these seven teachers, storytelling seems to have developed through a combination of circumstances. Although the teachers all became storytellers, the paths they took are different, as are the stories they tell.

Even recognizing that part of development as a storyteller is individual, the common factors noted above seem to suggest that the development of storytellers can be encouraged. By being around storytellers, an individual may be encouraged to become one. Although those whose families are involved in storytelling may be at an advantage, several teachers noted the value of alternative models such as teachers and fellow Boy Scouts. Perhaps the key is having some type of storytelling model available to the prospective storyteller.

Coupled with the availability of a model is the need for storytelling. There needs to be a reason for the individual to begin to use storytelling. The combination of these two factors, availability and need, together may lead to increased likelihood that an individual would develop as a storyteller.

Implications

The storytelling teachers in this study all identify storytelling as an important instructional tool. Their insights into their development as storytellers suggest that there are a variety of ways to develop. In the attempt to help prospective teachers develop the ability to use storytelling effectively in the classroom, the storytelling teachers' stories can be helpful

There appears to be a need to provide a storytelling role model. For those prospective teachers with storytelling in their family background, providing a role model in a college classroom is less necessary. For those without a family background of storytelling, providing a model during teacher education experiences seems critical. While this model need not be within the college classroom, a model is needed.

There also appears to be a need to help the prospective teacher identify a situation where storytelling fills a need, both instructionally and interpersonally. While background and the existence of a role model are important elements in the prospective teacher considering storytelling, the prospective teacher needs to see the connection between the classroom situation and the use of storytelling. Instruction and hands on experience during teacher education preparation seems critical to helping the prospective teacher see this connection.

Storytelling can become a more important part of our preparation of teachers and then a part of their teaching repertoire. By looking to the insights of experienced storytelling teachers, we can help prospective teachers begin to develop their storytelling abilities.

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Thinking About Learning: Progenitor and Progeny

Marino C. Alvarez, Christopher M. Alvarez

Reading/writing literacy environments are important contexts especially when learning new information. Environment plays an important role in student learning, both in social contexts and in solitary contexts that involve the writing, interpretation, and reflection of ideas gleaned from conversations and readings. The literacy skills needed to learn, make connections within and among disciplines, and communicate with others are vital to learners who are expected to achieve educational goals espoused by the academies (e.g., American Association for the Advancement of Science, 1989; International Reading Association, 1992; Royal Society, 1985; Science Council of Canada, 1984). So, too, are the specific ways in which these learners use language and instructional tools for literacy learning and applying scientific, mathematical, and social studies concepts (e.g., concept maps and computer applications).

A neglected area of study is the ways in which teachers and their children engage in content literacy: reading, writing, listening, speaking, and thinking within and among disciplines. Comparatively few investigations center on the kinds and types of strategies that parents who are teachers and their children use in dealing with homework and in-class assignments. This article focuses on how literacy environments are augmented as a father and a son negotiate meaning with homework assignments using metacognitive tools for thinking and learning. Specifically, we show how hierarchical concept maps, electronic communications via the Internet, and class activities influence literacy skills. Within this realm, the learning contexts, operationally defined as those mental models that one invokes when confronted

with authentic problem-oriented tasks that go beyond memorizing and compartmentalizing information, employed by the son as he pursues class assignments and constructs knowledge from his own questions, thoughts, and experience are reported.

Theoretical Research Base

Gowin's (1981) theory of educating, Ausubel's (1968) cognitive theory of meaningful reception learning, and a constructivist epistemology provide the philosophical and theoretical background upon which this investigation is designed and subsequent results interpreted. Gowin's theory of educating focuses on the educative event and its related concepts and facts.[1] This theory stresses the centrality of the learner's experience in educating. Ausubel's learning theory places central emphasis on the influence of the student's prior knowledge on subsequent meaningful learning. Three conditions are necessary for meaningful learning to occur. One is for meaningful materials to be concept rich, with clear relationships. Second is for the learner to have relevant prior knowledge and experience with the concepts and propositions that are presented in the new materials. The third condition is for learners to have a meaningful learning set - a disposition to link new concepts, propositions, and examples to prior knowledge and experience (see Novak, 1998). Philosophers such as Brown (1979), Gowin (1970, 1981), and Toulmin (1972) believe that knowledge is constructed from experience using concepts as stepping stones.

How students create their own thinking-learning contexts when confronted with authentic problem-oriented tasks is an important issue that influences instruction and learning. Thinking-learning contexts are those mental models (conceptual frameworks) that students invoke when confronted with problem-oriented tasks that go beyond memorizing and compartmentalizing information (Alvarez, 1993). Mental models represent a person's construal of existing knowledge and/or of new information though this information may be fragmentary, inaccurate, or inconsistent (Gentner & Gentner, 1983). A person's mental model is a representation of a particular belief based on existing knowledge of a physical system or a semantic representation depicted in a text. Holt (1969, 1989) states that our mental models change when we explore the world around us, and create knowledge out of our own questions, thoughts, and experiences. In essence, a mental model comprises our organization of world knowledge and experience and represents our structure of reality (Alvarez, 1990).

[1] In an educative event, teachers and learners share meanings and feelings so as to bring about a change in the human experience.

Conflicting Views: Parent and Child

Parents want their children to achieve to their fullest potential. Many participate in helping their children with their homework. They draw upon their past experiences by reflecting when they were once students in the elementary, middle, and secondary grades. Sometimes their knowledge of the subject disciplines is not congruent with current information that their child is learning in school. This requires either further study by the parent, or results in total helplessness because the subject may have been difficult during past school years.

For parents who are also professional teachers these same conditions exist, but are further exacerbated due to their beliefs about the importance of target content, the age appropriateness of the concepts and content, and the methods by which their child's teacher is situating the learning environment. The parent's viewpoint may conflict with that of his or her child's teacher. Within this setting, a parent who is also a teacher is confronted by a child who has expectations, procedures, and notions for studying and learning that may be in conflict with either the parent/teacher or the teacher at school.

Background

This paper arose from a conversation with Christopher, age 13, when he attended the American Educational Research Association annual meeting in Chicago with us. It was not unusual for Christopher to be traveling with his mother and me to various conferences since he has done so since the age of two months. He commented on several of these conference visits by saying "teachers talk about what kids need to do to learn, but they never have kids talk about what they feel or what they need to do in order to learn." His mother, Vicki Risko, a former elementary teacher and now a professor of literacy and I have presented over a hundred papers together and separately since his birth. Being a former middle and secondary teacher I felt that together Vicki and I had a sense of what our son needed in the area of education and the strategies necessary to accomplish these learning tasks. However on this occasion, he suggested that a proposal be written for him to present at a literacy conference to teachers. He reasoned that "nobody will come to hear a kid" so in a matter of fact tone of voice stated: "I need you to be a part of the presentation so people will come." Needless to say, I was overwhelmed with this gracious "tag-along" invitation. With this somewhat mixed, but interesting idea in mind, we planned what we would do, submitted a proposal, and presented together at the American Reading Forum Conference.

Situation

As a father and a teacher who, along with his mother, helps and reviews homework assignments with Christopher several situations arose where in his eyes "father didn't always know best." Instead, assignments by Christopher's teachers were sometimes in conflict with him in that he had alternative ways to complete the lessons or sometimes was in conflict with his father who questioned the purpose of the assignment. There was a tug of war between what we consider learning information in meaningful ways as opposed to learning information by rote memorization for later retrieval.

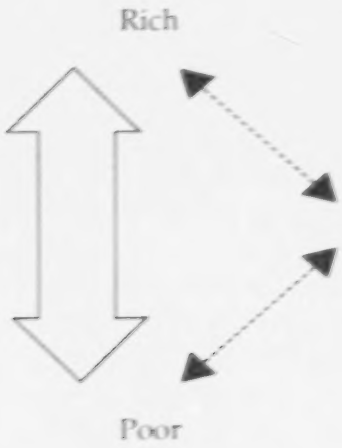
To bridge this gap, Christopher agreed to construct concept maps in his English class while reading the play *The Diary of Anne Frank*, an assigned reading for the students in the class, and also in his science class while studying "conifers." Hierarchical concept maps were learned by Christopher when he was four-years old. He constructed these maps early in his formal schooling in grades 1 and 2, and has initiated their use sporadically in other subjects during the early grades. For both the English and science classes, students followed a traditional format whereby assignments were given and students engaged in typical question/answer formats using worksheets, assigned readings, group discussions, and written responses. His social studies class was geared more toward student-centered learning activities by describing collaborative learning formats and the use of a strategy, Hierarchy Arrows, to depict contrasting points of view. In all three of these classes the Internet was used to access information pertinent to each subject, and papers were prepared using word processing software.

Negotiation Process

In social studies class the teacher, Mr. Robert Dorris, used collaborative learning groups as a forum to share ideas with assigned topics. For example, Mr. Dorris assigned homework topics for the students to research (e.g., slavery). Students were then placed in groups to discuss their independent reading and viewpoints. When the discussion was concluded, students were asked to write a one hundred and seventy-five word paragraph summarizing what was discussed. The next day the class assembled in a large circle and students took turns discussing their writings. Students from each group selected a speaker and a responder. The speaker narrated what he or she wrote and then the rest of the students responded. Christopher reported that this method enabled students to share their views within their groups and then with the entire class. He summarized his teacher's philosophy by stating:

> Our teacher does not believe in textbook learning or grades. In fact he gives you an automatic 100 if you do the assignment. Once we do an assignment we sit in a circle and ask each other questions. Our teacher doesn't even talk in the circle; he just listens. Then on the third day he gives an explanation of the discussions. This is another way of learning instead of memorizing information.

Another method in which students negotiate meaning in this social studies class is for them to draw Hierarchy Arrows. Visual representations through hierarchies show differences and similarities between ideas. In this class the teacher uses hierarchy arrows to show these relationships. A simple Hierarchy Arrow is shown below:



Christopher described this process: "We all picked topics and had to either write about them or use hierarchy arrows. I chose hierarchy arrows to display my topic on Ethnic Differences." The arrow pointing upwards indicates meaningful ways in which the topic can be represented. The downward arrow indicates the opposite meaning in which the topic can be contrasted. Information is portrayed visually showing divergent points along the spectrum (see broken lines). These activities were viewed positively by Christopher for several reasons. He was actively participating in discussions of the text ideas and he was using learning ways to organize and represent what he was learning.

Noting Christopher's positive response to this type of practice in his own learning, I reminded him of his previous use of concept maps to help him understand text ideas. We decided to use concept maps to help him understand his English and science texts. In science Christopher constructed a hierarchical map describing "conifers" (see Appendix A). The first draft (rough draft) shows "conifers" as the superordinate concept. The coordinate concepts are "spruce", "ginkgo", "pine", and "cedar". He shows the relationship of each concept and the interrelationships of those concepts using cross-links repre-

sented by broken lines. He incorporates the use of the hierarchy arrow (learned in social studies class) to show how they can be subsumed under "gymnosperms" which initiates the life cycle.

In his second map (final draft), the concepts have been rearranged to better portray the kinds, types, and function of "conifers." The ideas are represented in a more coherent manner that incorporates the process of the cycle (see Appendix B).

Hierarchical concept maps are also used to represent the play, *The Diary of Anne Frank*, he was reading in English class. One map represents the "Frank Family Members" of the play; the other focuses on a specific family, the Van Daan's who are prominent within the play's setting (see Appendices C and D). He was better able to understand the circumstances under which the Frank family endured and is able to learn for himself the role that one family has in this real-life episode.

Concept maps mediated the learning process by enabling Christopher to organize ideas in meaningful ways, and share these with his father. This process enabled Christopher and father to reach common views about expectations and aided in understanding text ideas. The visual display promoted better understanding of the topic being studied for both parties. However, mediated learning strategies, such as the use of concept maps, take time and effort to negotiate meaning. The use of this type of metacognitive strategy demands deeper understanding of the content being studied by the child and parent if meaning is the goal during this learning process. During these mediated study homework sessions, the mental models of both parents and child were altered as they studied and reviewed homework assignments and monitored projects. For the parent it provided an opportunity to revisit the grade and courses studied by the child. During this process the parent's perceptions and knowledge with the subject disciplines were sometimes approached from a stance different from when he was a child. Likewise, the child experienced academic and social situations that differed from those of his parents.

During this three-week period of examining study practices, several discord factors were reinforced: (1) The *test* became the major focus for study. Specific aspects of the text were emphasized as the prime points of concentration. Under this circumstance, learning as a *process* becames blurred compared to learning as a *product*. Emphasis on "right" answers was valued over understanding. (2) Discrepancies arose between what *a child thinks and feels* are important facts and ideas to learn, and what his *teachers* think are important facts and ideas to learn, and also those ideas viewed important by *parents*. The challenge

became the weaning process from focusing on the literal information and those portions of the text that were the subject for the test to concentrating more on the facts and ideas and their relationships.

Conclusion

Several interesting aspects of negotiated meaning arose during these homework study sessions. One is the ways in which the parent and the child become thinkers and resolve literacy assignments using metacognitive tools. Another is the ways in which individuals choose to relate new information to existing world knowledge and how this new information influences their future knowledge and decision-making are integral factors in the learning process.

An important factor is for parents to be aware of the types of learning environments in which their child is operating. The learning environments for the science and English classes seem to begin a study of one topic and then move to another with little synthesis. Analysis seems prevalent in these two classes, with topics being textbook bound within science class and emphasis on analysis of structural elements (e.g., theme, plot, setting, character) of each written work in English class. The effort seems to be placed on analyzing the information, not synthesizing the information with related topics, themes, or ideas from past readings.

Knowing this condition aids the parent who is knowledgeable in content learning strategies to fortify these kinds of educational environments with supplementary readings and learning strategies. Although concept maps were used by Christopher with science and English class assignments, he is reluctant to use them on a regular basis. The primary reason is that they "take too long." Even though concept maps clarified ideas and made meaning personal, tools that involve time and effort are perceived as something extra to do beyond what is required. It may be that in classes emphasizing positivistic answers, a student may rely on "what works best" to get the "right" answer. Knowing the "answer" seems to take precedence over "understanding" the importance, use, and applicability of newly-learned information. In such conditions, meaningful learning is relegated to a position not highly valued by the learner.

Christopher's social studies class seemed to be more student-centered. Students were encouraged to think and synthesize ideas as they completed homework assignments and related class activities. The traditional curriculum of studying in a chronological progression is abandoned. Instead, the teacher facilitates the learning context by

relying on students to read, ask questions, discuss, and record their thoughts. He listens to their discussions among themselves and gives them time to reflect on their thoughts when they write and report on their short summary of what transpired. The content of the class seems not to be dictated within given time frames. Instead, students are given time to research, meditate, discuss, and reflect on the topic under study. The use of hierarchy arrows provides a framework for students to monitor their thoughts and serves as a tool for comparing and contrasting different points of view within a given topic. This type of class provides opportunities for students to access multiple references such as the Internet to search for related sources for a given topic. For example, Christopher searched the Internet for information about a topic he was researching (The Trail of Tears). He encountered several articles on this topic, and also became engaged on a chat line in a conversation with an author who had written a book about the Trail of Tears when the Indians crossed Missouri.

To enhance text based learning assignments, meaning can be negotiated between parents and their children using metacognitive tools such as hierarchy arrows and hierarchical concept maps. Ideas are visually displayed so that question-asking can be stimulated and misconceptions can be clarified. This process encourages critical and imaginative thinking by bridging what was then and what is now as in the case of the play. It also provides mechanisms for both the parent and child to negotiate the meaning of the assigned lesson by offering a framework by which meaning can be better understood by both parties. Once the concept map is in its final form, it serves to enhance literacy skills by functioning as a template from which the child writes coherent paragraphs for a self-summary or report.

The primary areas of contention are time expended for study, depth of understanding, and reasons for learning new information. Although differences between a parent who is also a teacher and a child are dependent upon the nature of the educational environment of both school and home, it is important that metacognitive tools be used by both teachers and students so that meaningful learning can occur. It is equally important that parents are knowledgeable about these types of metacognitive strategies so that they are versed in interpreting and making new meaning with existing ideas as they facilitate their child's learning.

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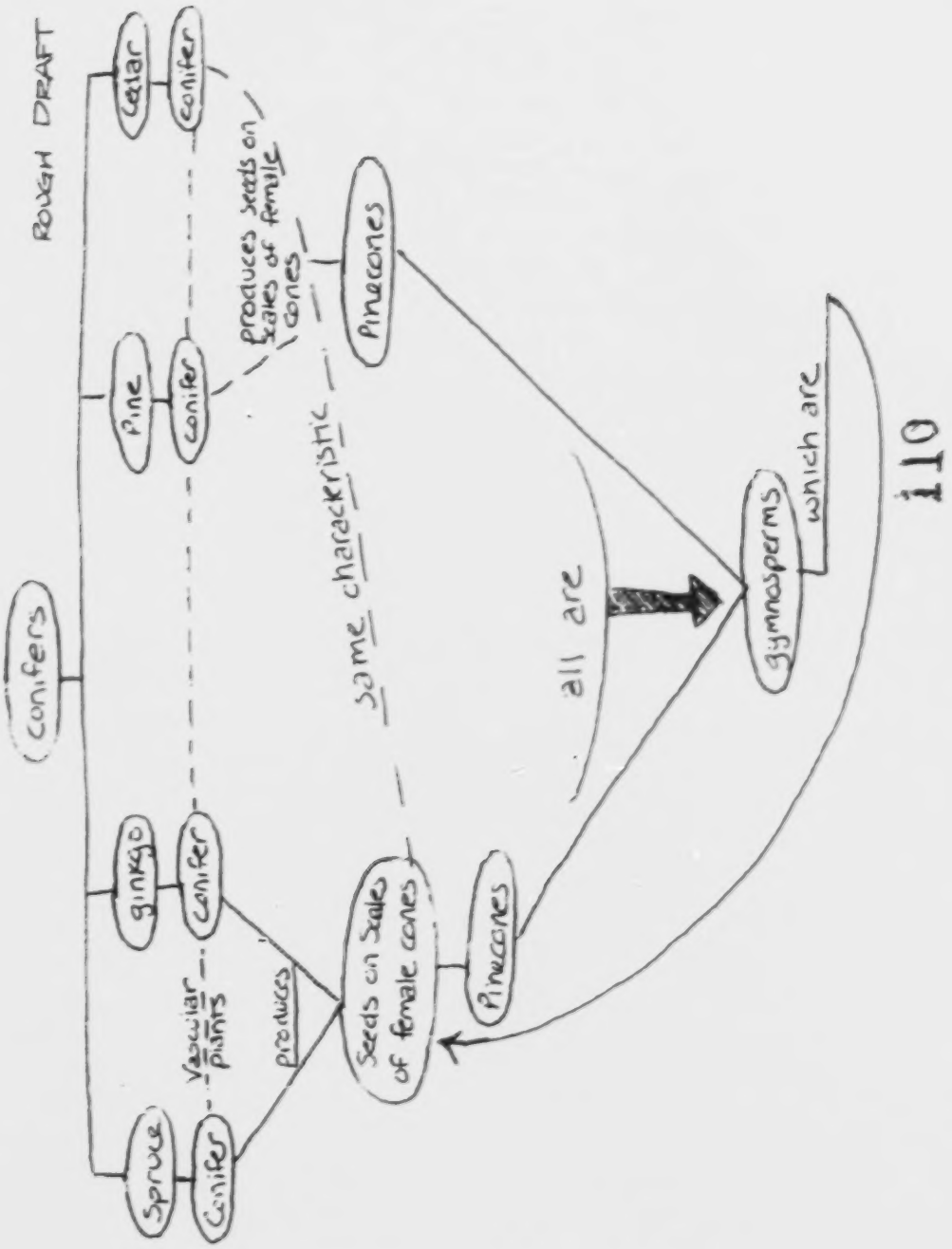
Appendix A


ROUGH DRAFT
conifers
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seeds on scales of female cones
pine
conifer
cedar
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same characteristic
Seeds on scales of female cones
Pinecones
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all are
gymnosperms
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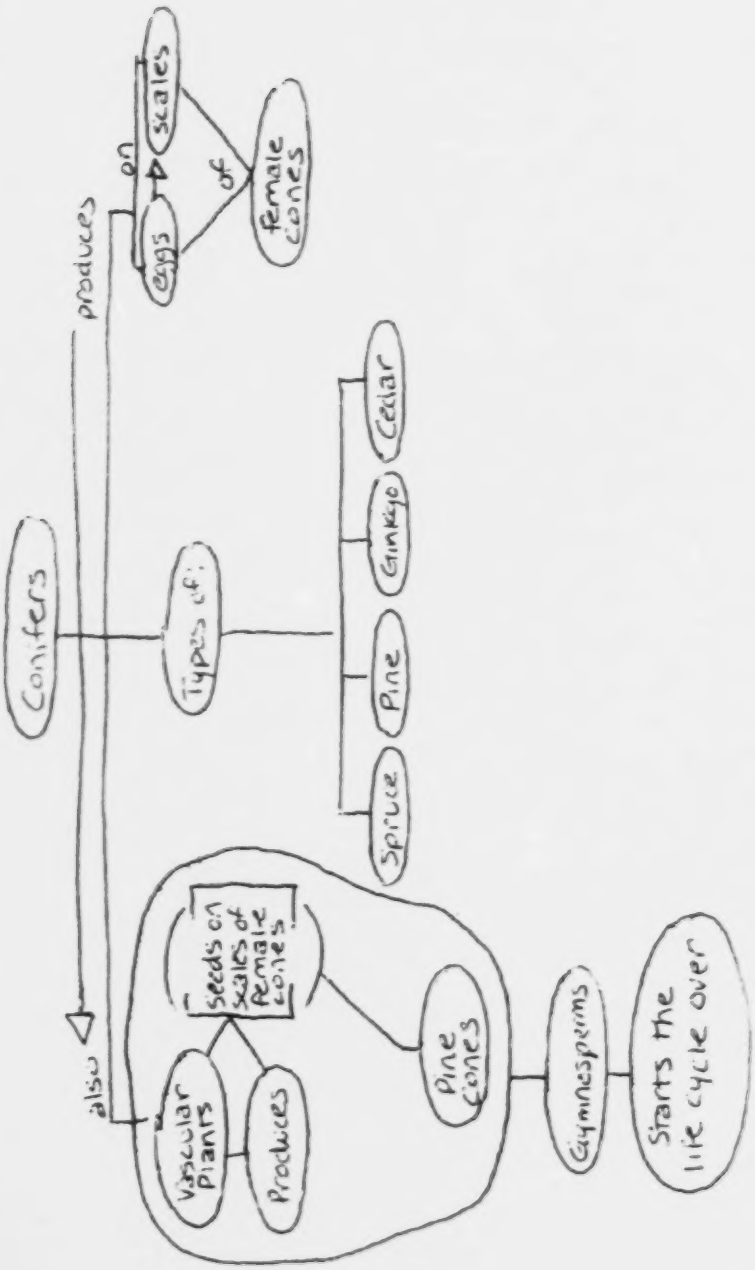
Appendix B



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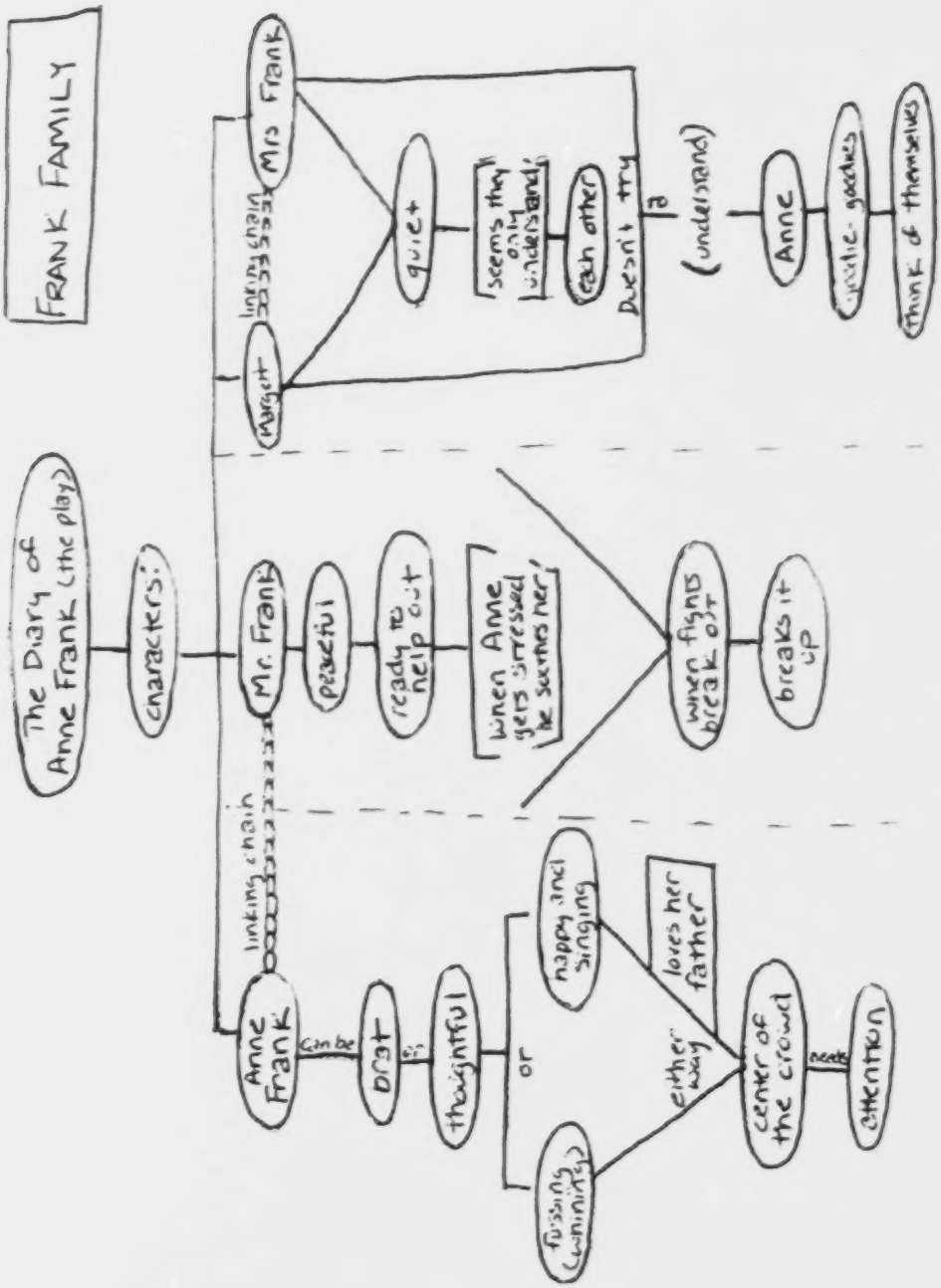
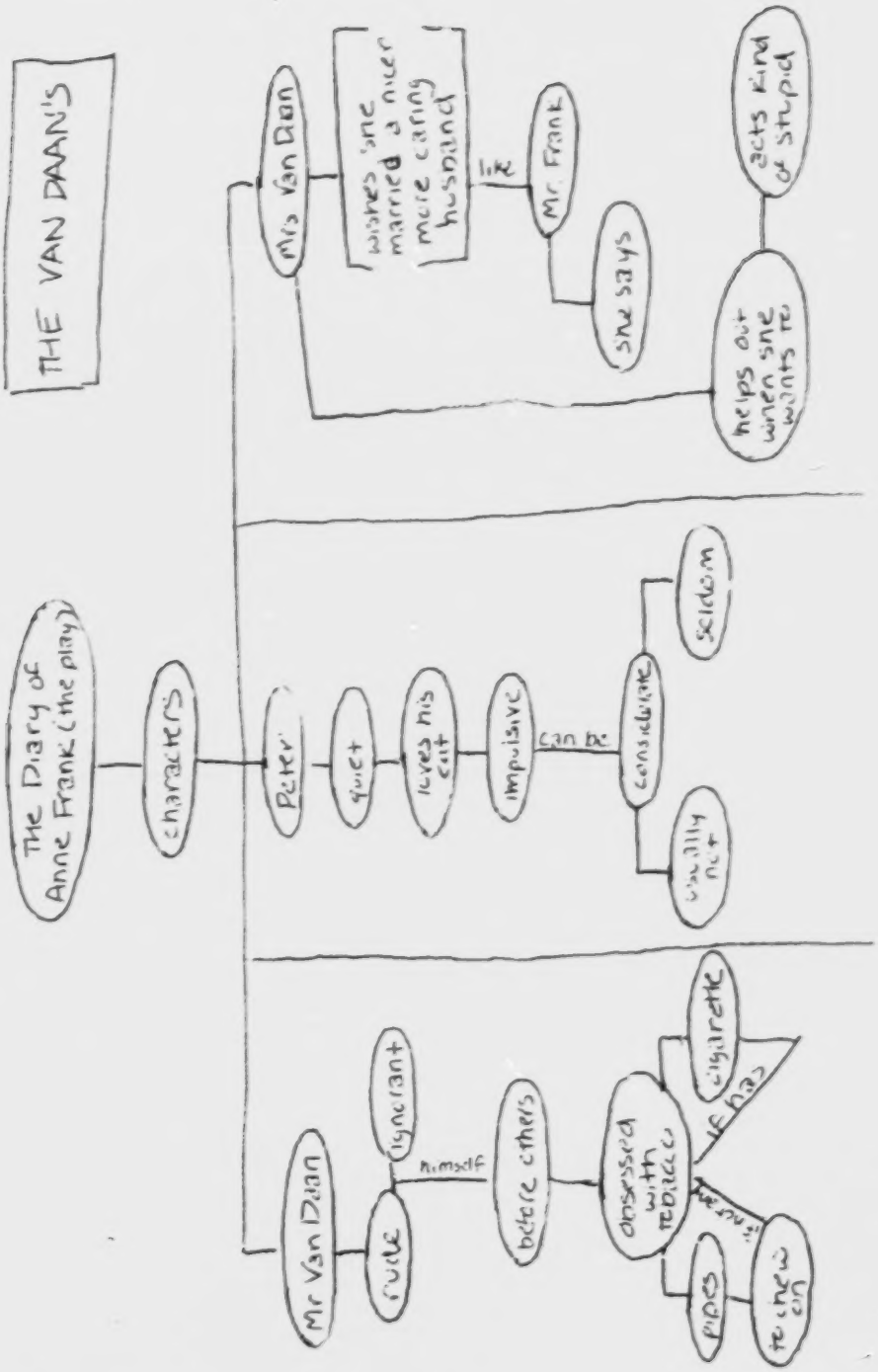
Appendix C


FRANK FAMILY
The Diary of Anne Frank (the play)
characters:
Mr. Frank
Mrs Frank
linking chain
linking chain
Anne Frank
can be
quiet
seems they only understand
each other
Doesn't try
(understand)
Anne
gentle-goodness
think of themselves
peaceful
ready to help out
when Anne gets stressed he soothes her
when fights break out
breaks it up
drat
thoughtful
or
happy and singing
loves her father
either way
center of the crowd
attention
112

Appendix D



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Like Father, Like Son

Ray Wolpow

"Toilet paper, where is my toilet paper?" All my life my father, the teacher, has been shuffling papers and drinking ice water. Today is no different. He lies in bed, one eye closed, his mind like a computer scanning its drives unable to find the operating system. I hand him the roll. "Tear off a little bundle for me and put it by my waist." Sensing my father's desperation, I comply. In clear view of everyone else in the room, he removes his urine bottle and meticulously cleans himself off. Discretely, I pull the sheet over his legs and waist. In rebellion, he shakes it back off with his right arm. My mom insists, "Cover yourself up, Meyer." He is annoyed, "I'm doing the best I can." He is.

I bring him his white-styrofoam, plastic-covered cup of water, shaking it first to make sure it has plenty of ice. Some of my worst fights with him as a child were when I hadn't prepared enough ice cubes for his "drinks." But this day, in room 427 of the Telemetry Ward at Bershire Medical Center, I put the straw up to his mouth and he drinks two gulps. "Is your water cold enough?" I ask. He nods. Once again he asks me for toilet paper. I grant his wish. "Speaking of paper," I say with a smile, "any chance I can get you to grade some of these papers I need to get ready for school?" I too am a teacher. "No, I am glad to be retired and out of that business," he says with a smile while continuing to focus on his own calling.

* * *

When I was a toddler, I played "open the hanger" while my father made propeller sounds and eventually landed a food-filled spoon in my wide-open mouth. A generation later, I played the same game with my two sons. Admittedly, my sound effects more closely resem-

bled jet engines. Today, I feed my father and I do so with dignity, not frivolity. First, cottage cheese with little pieces of lettuce on it. Then sips of milk through a straw. Between sips, I spoon-feed him cherry jello with whipped cream. He likes the whipped cream. When the milk is gone, I offer him ice water between spoons of jello. Turning his head away from the styrofoam cup, he says,

"I want some more milk."

"I'm sorry. There's no more milk left, Dad. Here, have some ice water."

"Okay."

I spoon him some more jello and offer water to wash it down. He turns his head away.

"I want some more milk."

"I'm sorry. There's no more milk left, Dad. Here, have some ice water."

"Okay."

I can't provide him with the solution he seeks. Nonetheless, he complies and drinks the ice water.

* * *

Dad wasn't always grading papers. I remember him parking our sky-blue DeSoto with its rusted chrome hood ornament on Bedford Avenue. On this day I ride in the front, where Mom usually sits. She is back home with my new baby sister. Today, my dad and I are going to do a "man" thing. While I wait at the curbside, I watch my long, lanky dad lock the car door with his key. He checks all the other doors and takes my six-year old hand in his. Making our way to the ballpark, we dodge trolleys and waves of people, until almost magically, we find our way through turnstiles, signs with rows and numbers, and aisle upon aisle of seats, until we are high above the right fielder.

This is the last game between the N.Y. Giants and the Brooklyn Dodgers at Ebbets Field. I can hardly see the players, but I know I am looking at my heroes, Pee Wee Reese, Duke Snider, Charlie Kneel. Soon Dad turns to me and explains that the seventh inning stretch is coming. He intends to stand before the Giants come to bat. This is

because he is a Giants fan. He tells me that I could stand with him if I want, but since I am a Dodger fan I will probably prefer to wait until the Dodgers come to bat. I watch my dad stand and stretch. He and the other Giant fans are but a few here at the Dodger's home arena. Three outs later I stand and wave at Pee Wee.

But today in the hospital, my father stares blankly towards the television. I've turned on the Orioles/White Sox game. The wild card could be hanging in the balance. "What's the score of the Yankee game?" Dad keeps asking me. "I don't know yet, Dad. But I'm sure your Yankees are clobbering the Tigers. I'll let you know."

* * *

I'm not very good at saying "goodbye." I usually figure I can always process the farewell later. But later never comes. When I take the time to think about this, I realize that I'm afraid of letting my feelings out. I'm scheduled to fly home early the next morning. I have classes to meet. What if I never see him again? How do I say goodbye? If I do see him, what vestiges of my father will remain?

I ask my dad if he has any messages for me to pass on to his two grandsons. "Yes, give them each a kiss for me." I crouch over his six-foot long body which has been in bed for a week, over his twisted and partially repaired hips, over his left leg and foot which he can't move anymore, over the urine bottle and the roll of toilet paper, to the man who is still my father. "Sure, Dad, I'll be glad to. Why don't you deposit those two kisses right here on my cheek and I'll pass them on.."

He smiles. I bend down until I feel his unshaven face and chapped lips. He kisses me twice. I run my fingers across his shiny head to his crown of white curly hair. I kiss him on the forehead and tell him I love him. He answers, "I love you too, son." I straighten, avoid looking at him and slip out the door.

I march down the ward, past the empty wheelchairs, the containers for soiled linen, and the uncollected dinner trays. As I step into an empty waiting room, my feelings leak out of my closed eyes and soak my recently kissed cheek.

Like father, like son... Like my father I know teaching requires loving and nurturing the children and families of others. As a child, this meant Dad often spent more time with his students and their papers than with me. Today, thirty-five years later, I walk into a classroom of my own and realize that my choice to teach, like that of my father, leaves little time to serve the family which is my own.

A Literacy Root Begins with a Seed: Planting an Elementary Education/ English for Speakers of Other Languages Teacher Preparation Program

Valerie J. Bristor, Jane Brady Matanzo

> All elementary and secondary school students currently in the U.S. will be living in and contributing to an increasingly diverse society and an increasingly interdependent community of nations in the twenty-first century. To realize their personal, social, and long-term career goals, individuals will need to be able to communicate with others skillfully, appropriately, and effectively. The challenge of contemporary education is to prepare all students for life in this new world, including those learners who enter schools with a language other than English. (TESOL, 1997b, p. 5)

Goodlad (1991) advocated the radical restructuring of teacher preparation programs in order to meet the needs of diverse student populations. As enrollment and identification of limited English proficient (LEP) students increase (Olsen, 1997), there is an increased need for teachers who can effectively teach both students from varied ethnic backgrounds and the increasing number of ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) students. The need is especially critical because there are few trained ESOL teachers; the majority of ESOL students receive most of their education from regular classroom teachers who often have not had specialized training (Lara, 1994).

The Seed is Planted

English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) is the language arts component in the education of LEP students across the nation. The State of Florida has the fourth largest LEP population in the United States (Olsen, 1997; Spangenberg-Urbschat & Pritchard, 1994) and must provide specific services for limited English proficient students. Training requirements for instructional and administrative personnel are specified in LULAC et al. v. SBE Consent Decree (1990). Although the consent decree did not impose any direct requirements on institutions of higher education, the Department of Teacher Education at Florida Atlantic University chose to plant the ESOL seed by developing the first Elementary Education/ESOL Teacher Preparation Program in Florida and possibly the country (TESOL, 1997a).

The Seed Takes Root

Florida Atlantic University Teacher Education faculty began by developing an ESOL endorsement program for inservice teachers seeking to meet training requirements set forth by the consent decree. The Teacher Education faculty at Florida Atlantic University also felt that undergraduate students (pre-service teachers) should be "ready" to teach ESOL students upon graduation without needing additional coursework or inservice training to meet state requirements. LeMon and Clayton-Kandor (1992) suggested that institutions of higher education provide a teaching degree at the undergraduate level that would include all Florida ESOL requirements. Inspired by LeMon and Clayton-Kandor's idea, Florida Atlantic University began fulfilling its vision for an Elementary Education degree with a built-in ESOL endorsement.

The four goals of the Elementary/ESOL program were to: (1) integrate core courses of the Elementary Education degree with ESOL competencies, (2) provide pre-service teachers with a program of studies that would lead to ESOL endorsement, (3) provide workshops to facilitate curricular integration, and (4) serve as a resource to other institutions of higher education.

The Department of Teacher Education designated a faculty member to serve as TESOL Coordinator responsible for coordinating, maintaining, and monitoring program quality. The TESOL Coordinator oversees the ESOL integration efforts in the designated courses, develops and instructs ESOL related faculty workshops, assists with field experience placements, serves as liaison to state agencies and school systems in the University's service area, prepares a portfolio and all necessary documentation for Program Review, and

coordinates with other departments and areas within the University regarding ESOL integration efforts.

Faculty participate in workshops which include TESOL methods, curriculum development and adaptation for ESOL students, alternative assessments for ESOL students, cross cultural communication and a general overview of second-language acquisition research. Faculty also may experience professional enhancement through conference attendance and presentations, memberships in professional organizations, and research and publication related to ESOL.

The Elementary Education/ESOL integrated program includes appropriate sequencing of required courses as well as two specially developed TESOL courses. The national ESL (English as a Second Language) standards and specific state ESOL competencies were infused into the language arts, reading, art, and content area courses through correlation of objectives, student activities, readings, and assessments directly related to ESOL competencies. The field experience component provides the pre-service teacher with multiple opportunities to interact with ESOL students in a variety of environments. "Master syllabi" were developed for each course to identify core information and resources for faculty to integrate into individually developed course syllabi.

The Seed Sprouts

With a core syllabic base and TESOL workshop training in place for Teacher Education faculty, it was time for the seed to change form and grow. Although training was emphasized for all faculty instructors in reading, language arts, math, science, social studies, and general education methodology courses, this article focuses on how the seed began sprouting in reading and language arts instruction. The initial "sprouting base" was that ESOL related instruction in the language arts and reading courses reflects both the three goals of the internationally recognized ESL Standards for Pre-K through Grade 12 Students (TESOL, 1997b) and the Florida State Department of Education ESOL competencies (the latter are required for the Florida ESOL endorsement of language arts teachers).

The ESL standards focus on three goals (TESOL, 1997b, pp. 23-25): (a) To use English to communicate in social settings by interacting in, through, and with spoken and written English for personal expression and enjoyment; (b) to use English to achieve academically in all content areas by obtaining, processing, constructing, and providing subject matter information in spoken and written form; and (c) to use English

in socially and culturally compatible ways demonstrating the appropriate language variety, register, and genre according to audience, purpose, and setting. In meeting these goals, faculty needed to incorporate and adapt ways to teach skills and concepts such as how to (a) use the telephone effectively, (b) encourage students to generate questions and to respond to both oral and written stimuli, (c) describe literary elements such as characters and settings, (d) sequence plot events, (e) use chunks of meaningful language rather than single words to communicate, (f) use realia or graphic representations to learn vocabulary and make the relationship between ideas or objects, and (g) teach strategies to self-monitor and refine one's communication skills. Students in reading and language arts courses are introduced to *ESL Standards for Pre-K-12 Students* (TESOL, 1997b) which offers teaching vignettes, descriptors of objectives for meeting each goal, and sample progress indicators. This helpful resource provides additional instructional possibilities beyond those strategies and activities which may be demonstrated and practiced during a preservice course.

In addition to reflecting the ESL Standards and Goals, the Florida State ESOL Competencies must be met. For example, in an introductory reading methodology course, objectives must be taught and documented. Teacher education students are expected to (a) demonstrate an understanding of the significance of a child's prior knowledge and background experience contributing to individual differences in all areas; (b) use knowledge of the cultural characteristics of Florida's LEP population to enhance instruction; (c) analyze student language and determine appropriate instructional strategies, using knowledge of morphology, syntax, semantics, and discourse; or (d) select, adapt, develop, and/or sequence instructional materials for a given set of instructional objectives and student learning needs must be taught and documented.

Strategies include Matanzo's (1997) adaptation of KWL (Ogle, 1986; Ogle, 1989): KWLSH (What do you know? What do you want to know? What did you learn? What do you still want to know? How will you find the additional information?). Another strategy is the Language Experience Approach (LEA) as a way to elicit oral language and to study and read the same language in print. Still other strategies include comparing syntax structure between English and Spanish and developing transitional activities between the two languages for students, using sentence strips and pocket charts to develop stories incrementally, and building a repertoire of both narrative and expository children's literature reflective of the cultural diversity in Florida. In a more advanced diagnostic reading course, preservice students must administer an Informal Reading Inventory with a given ESOL student. During the

subsequent meetings with that student, an original instructional plan is developed and implemented over the span of several weeks to enhance the ESOL student's oral language and reading progress.

Basically, preservice students are exposed to a variety of effective instructional strategies which will work with non-ESOL students as well but which may require more repetition or a greater use of visuals when being used with students who are still acquiring English. Despite the emphasis on instruction of the ESOL student, this should not take precedence over instructing other students in the given classroom. Instead, it should be incorporated with other instruction whenever possible. To ensure that teacher education students understand how to meet the needs of both student groups, faculty demonstrate ways the same strategy might be used with non-ESOL students and then adapted appropriately to the specific needs and language proficiency of ESOL students in the same classroom setting. Cooperative learning groups are strongly recommended as one instructional means for meeting the needs of ESOL students and modeled frequently in the methodology courses.

The Plant Grows

As students increase their knowledge of effective strategies, faculty are aware of the importance of a healthy environment in which that knowledge can be nurtured. Therefore, courses establish a strong philosophical foundation based on the following premises:

1. Each student is special and needs reinforcement in some way.
2. Effective instruction must be used with flexible grouping.
3. Instruction and assessment must be linked together to ensure optimal learning growth for each student.
4. Each student can. Can'ts, like weeds, must be plucked.
5. A sensitivity and appreciation of the differences and similarities among students and teachers must be fostered.
6. Materials and activities used should reflect cultural diversity even if such diversity is not represented among a group of students in given a classroom.

In addition, general guidelines are offered and practiced with pre-service students for their consideration when planning instruction. These guidelines include:

1. Alternate response modes to avoid an over emphasis on paper and pencil activities; the Every Pupil Response Strategy (EPR), role playing, artistic expression, and the use of manipulatives are examples of response alternatives.

2. Do frequent think-alouds to explain reading passages or concepts being taught; encourage students to do think-alouds.

3. Use reciprocal questioning (ReQuest Strategy, Manzo, 1969) to encourage students to ask the teacher questions about a passage and then to answer variety of questions the teacher models.

4. Accompany instruction with pictures, videos, concrete objects, or other realia to enhance concept development and understanding.

5. Engage in informal conversations frequently using key words and concepts being taught.

6. Provide self-checking opportunities so students can receive immediate feedback and learn to monitor their own adjustments in using language.

7. Select texts which include explanatory illustrations and graphics; emphasize the use of visuals and assign primarily parts of the texts that convey the most important information in learning a given concept.

8. Develop various means to repeat given concepts and vocabulary including paraphrasing students' responses and encouraging students to rehearse ideas using the Think, Pair, Share Strategy (Lyman, 1988) before needing to respond orally before a larger group.

9. Read, read, read a variety of genre orally on a regularly scheduled basis and provide ways for ESOL students to hear those same readings repeatedly and to read or talk along through access to a listening center or by reading with a buddy or volunteer.

Just as a plant needs water and fertilizer, students need the strategies described above to provide the atmosphere in which language growth and learning comfort of ESOL students can be enhanced.

The Plant Blooms and Multiplies

As preservice students internalize the various strategies and practice them with actual ESOL students in guided situations, their confidence in knowing what to do with language diverse students in their various teaching settings increases. In the sequence of courses, the preservice students gradually become more independent in their planning and work with ESOL students over an extended period of time. Since we are still in the early phases of integrating ESOL endorsement with the elementary education program, longitudinal data are not yet available. However, the university supervisors of student interns during their full time teaching experience have shared numerous accounts of appropriate strategies being used by former methodology students in their assigned classrooms. Initial observations on the transfer of preservice knowledge gained during methodology courses on how to instruct ESOL students effectively are encouraging. More formal data needs to be collected and evaluated; but, just as in a newly planted flower bed, each bloom is exciting and contributes to the quality and appropriateness of the environment.

Maintaining the Garden

The planting of the ESOL seed in this elementary teacher education curriculum was a beginning. We now have progressed to the flowering stage and are seeing bouquets of ESOL instructional effectiveness in classrooms. However, in order to make a garden flourish, ongoing attention is imperative. Likewise, we are finding that certain elements are essential for the ESOL-Elementary Education integrated program to stabilize and refine its offerings. Recommendations for this continued growth include the following:

1. Provide faculty with training updates through additional workshops and/or strategy newsletters.

2. Increase TESOL print and non-print resources and their availability to faculty and university students.

3. Encourage faculty from the various methodology areas to dialogue and note any duplications of assignments, readings, or ways the various curricular areas and field-based requirements might be co-supportive.

4. Develop a means to disseminate information about the ESOL instruction preservice students are receiving to local school personnel where they are assigned for participatory and intern experiences.

This article has provided an overview of how reading and language arts instruction can meet a state ESOL endorsement requirement by integrating the needed knowledge and competencies into an existing program. Cooperation among faculty was essential and evident. Students who have completed the integrated methodology courses and their internships appear to be considering ESOL needs and incorporating strategies as a natural part of their planning and instructional processes. It should be noted that the strategies cited earlier are a small sampling of the scope of ESOL strategies and knowledge gained by students in this integrative curriculum.

Thus, the ESOL seed was planted, took root, sprouted, and flowered! The inclusion of various maintenance checkpoints in the teacher education program should assure continuing bloom and the opportunity for students to pick from an abundant garden of practical strategies which will help them deliver appropriate instruction to the ESOL students they teach.

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Urban College Developmental and High School English Teachers Working Together

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In this paper we examine a nearly twenty-year collaboration between college English teachers and high school English teachers in an urban school district. The authors, who include an urban high school English teacher and a college developmental English teacher, examine the ways in which literacy educators from two cultures worked together to help young adult writers. Although each author views the collaboration through a unique lens, all agree that the coming together of these two cultures proved to be valuable.

Collaboration Among School and College English Teachers

Although college and high school teachers work with the same students on either side of high school graduation, frequently there is a lack of communication between the two groups (Schultz, Laine & Savage, 1988) and stereotypes about the two cultures exist (Laine, Schultz & Smith, 1994). In the dialogue described here, teachers from both settings had an opportunity to talk and listen to each other, describe the work of their respective students, create more authentic assessment methods, and share teaching strategies that proved effective in their respective settings. They worked together to help underprepared students become better readers and writers.

The experiences of these college and high school English teachers can be viewed through a cultural lens. Any social group, to the extent that it is a distinctive unit, will have to some degree a culture differing from that of other groups, a somewhat different set of understandings

around which action is organized, and these differences will find expression in a language whose nuances are peculiar to that group (Becker & Geer, 1970). Schools and colleges can be seen as two separate cultures (Schultz, Laine & Savage, 1988). Each of these cultures reflects what Pitman (1987) describes as a patterned way of life which constrains the choices of its members and constitutes their subjectivities. These cultural constraints help explain the barriers that frequently exist between literacy teachers in schools and colleges.

The common work of these teachers over this period was to introduce new techniques for teaching and assessing writing. There are dangers inherent in the introduction of such "innovations" within complex settings like urban universities and public schools. Michael Fullan, in *The Meaning of Educational Change* (1982), describes the fragile nature of any collaborative effort that hopes to bring about change.

> When we try to look at change directly from the point of view of each and every individual affected by it, and aggregate these individual views, the task of educational change becomes a bit unsettling. When we are dealing with reactions and perceptions of diverse people in diverse settings, faulty communication is guaranteed. People are a nuisance but the theory of meaning says that individual concerns come with the territory; addressing these concerns is educational change. (p. 295)

This seems to be particularly true of the collaboration described here, efforts that include participants from different cultural settings; the cultures of schools and of universities.

As in all such ventures, there are a number of divergent but overlapping intentions. We are all invested in promoting our own particular agendas. Some of us are primarily driven by research interests; others look for opportunities to collaborate. Others seek to understand another culture better. Some seek accountability. Others want teachers to feel ownership for a program that they will eventually have to accept. Some look for a chance to learn first-hand what "they" have up their sleeves, what is, in fact, going to be coming down in the schools. And, finally, some look for an opportunity to affect what that might be.

As teachers and researchers, we are compelled to help each other. Savage (1988) argues that many of us are members of marginalized groups. Faculty members in urban two-year open access colleges and urban teachers are examples of marginalized groups. In many ways, all lead a kind of marginal existence. Although they lack any obvious signs of power, they can form coalitions and become crucial agents for change.

These efforts could encourage what Savage calls "neighborliness," people from one culture working for the sake of people in another culture. This neighborliness could also include individuals from less marginalized populations. However, neighborliness is not easy. Personal agendas need to be displaced by the interests of the young people and communities served by these urban schools and colleges. For university faculty, for example, the priority cannot be research and publication. For school administrators, the priorities cannot be accountability, public recognition, or the demands of particular parents. For teachers, the priority cannot be professional advancement. The key seems to be *working for the sake of the people in the other culture*. Limnality, the recognition that persons on the margins of society are pregnant with possibilities for transforming society (Pitman, 1987), is at the roots of effective collaboration.

The Setting

In a large Midwestern city, a urban high school sits across the street from a university. During the past twenty years, teams of school and college teachers met in that high school and on that university campus to plan activities that would support the literacy learning of developmental students in both settings. The urban high schools drew students from affluent, middle-class, and very poor neighborhoods and from largely African-American and urban Appalachian populations. Several of the schools had extensive vocational education programs. Others emphasized unique magnet programs, like computer technology, preparation for college, or the creative and performing arts.

Throughout this long collaborative effort, the explicit purpose, as outlined by the funding agency, was to experiment with and refine writing assessment and instructional methods in urban high school English classrooms in an effort to reduce the number of students needing remedial writing instruction when they entered college. However, over these years, there were actually many emerging goals: (a) implementing holistic scoring techniques, (b) instituting portfolios in the high schools, (c) using high school portfolios as a tool for student placement in the two-year open-access college's developmental English courses, (d) creating assignments that integrate reading and writing, (e) developing rubrics for grading papers, (f) generating appropriate, fair, and stimulating writing prompts, (g) helping students create their own rubrics for various assignments, and (h) supporting student involvement, especially in peer editing and revising groups.

This type of collaborative work was new for everyone. We did not have to deal with such diverse groups of people in the course of our regular professions. The backgrounds of these school and college fac-

ulty varied. Some came from traditions of rhetoric and composition, others from linguistics or American and English literature. Still others had training in educational administration and cognitive psychology. Some of the English teachers had been working in these urban schools for over twenty years, others were new to the profession. Some of the university faculty had never taught in a public school, others had not taught a high school class in nearly twenty years. The expectations we held for ourselves and that others held for us were unique.

The Lens of the Urban High School English Teacher

The teaching of writing is different from other facets of language arts instruction. In teaching reading, at least traditionally and in the case of K-12 teaching, for expediency, the focus is still primarily on the text. In teaching speech, the focus is on a prescribed set of delivery strategies and again, on the text itself. When you set about "teaching" someone to write, the focus splits into a critical balance between the writer, the writer's process, and the writer's text. In the midst of the teaching and the writing, it is often impossible to separate "the dancer from the dance."

As I write these words, I am unsure that anyone except another teacher-writer will understand them. And I smile to remember a time when I would have scoffed at the notion of giving weighty consideration to the writer or the process through which the product became text. At that long ago time, I considered myself a teacher of English (meaning literature) and writing was something students did so that I could access their knowledge of literary analysis. I taught the five paragraph essay, the Warriner's grammar book, and Milton with righteous zeal. The ideas of voice and audience were beyond my ken. Grammatically correct compositions of accurate information were my goals for my students. The only worm in this cozy idyll was intermittent voices from on high: university and college professors, who raged in print and occasionally at ill-received inservices, about the sin of the five paragraph essay, a sin whose name, formulaic writing, was added to my vocabulary, but not my understanding. After reading each article or attending each presentation, my colleagues and I would rant about college professors and the virtues of the five paragraph essay. Then I would return to my classroom and guiltily resume teaching writing the only way I knew how.

Luckily for me, and the students I would teach thereafter, I began teaching for the urban public schools and, as a result, became part of the collaboration between the schools and the university. I remember

thinking before the first meeting, "Perhaps this time they, the college professors, will tell me what to teach instead of the five paragraph essay." Instead of being prescribed to, the teachers were asked to think about what "good" writing is; we were shown student work and asked to identify elements of good writing; we were introduced to holistic scoring methods; and, finally, we were taught how to use student work to construct a holistic writing rubric. While this may sound pretty tame and, indeed, outmoded in 1998, twenty years ago in my city, it was radical. The other teachers and I were threatened because our whole pedagogy seemed under attack–and under attack by college professors. We felt powerless to speak with them, let alone against them.

When the college faculty began the presentations, I, and many others, were prepared to take notes, swallow our criticisms, and try to understand how to incorporate the lessons they would teach us. After all, these were the people we had been preparing our students to please during all of our teaching careers. "You'd better be able to write clearly, grammatically, (fill in your choice), or you won't pass freshman comp!" was the familiar mantra. These college faculty knew their audience. Imagine our surprise at being asked about writing and student writers, instead of being chastised and accused. This sharing of opinions and knowledge between the university faculty and the public school teachers ushered in a collaboration that resulted in process-oriented writing tests being given to students, meaningful writing inservice, in the guise of holistic scoring sessions, being made available to public school teachers, and a truer, more whole, understanding of fledgling writers and how to guide them on both sides of high school graduation.

As this process progressed, my colleagues and I sat elbow to elbow with college teachers and scored high school papers and freshman college exit exams. It was an interesting, often humorous, sometimes painful, but always illuminating experience. As high school teachers, we were empowered by having our ideas listened to and our experiences credited. We began accepting the university teachers as colleagues. Our understanding of writing widened. Suddenly, writing was beyond grammar and organization. The message, the audience, and the writer came into clearer focus and secured the place of dominance that is necessary for effective writing. Students were no longer just students; they were writers and we needed to secure their trust in order to teach and guide writing instruction. Though this idea did not meet with universal practice, many of us began to believe that in order to teach writers, one had to write often and in the classroom.

Sitting at a scoring session one summer afternoon in one of the university buildings, I listened for what seemed the fifth time to a professor castigate high school teachers for the predominance of the five paragraph essay. After this last diatribe, the scoring resumed and by chance I was given a stack of this person's papers to score a second time. Our scores were vastly different, leading to many third readings. I was momentarily alarmed until the chief reader explained to me that his university colleague, in spite of such passionate rhetoric, had totally rewarded the five paragraph essays in the scoring packet. This episode, and others like it, opened up dialogues, not between college and high school teachers, but between teachers who taught writers.

Eventually, the high school teachers in our district became dissatisfied. The first writing test we had designed gave students no time to plan and prewrite. Several years later, the collaboration created a new assessment, one that gave a day to plan and a day to write. Yet, there was no time for the students to talk with the teachers or peers about what they were writing. Finally, at an English Advisory board meeting, where representatives from all the high school English departments came together with the district's supervisor of English, someone said, "Real writers do not work in total isolation. They talk. They conference. How can we get that 'realness' into our writing assessment?"

This question and the unrest it represented combined with a serendipitous combination of teacher leaders, central office leadership, and the new state writing testing and reporting mandates, led to the development of the public school portfolio assessment. This portfolio assessment, which has been in use for about nine years in our district, resulted in our urban public school teachers (several who had been in the first collaborative meeting, so long ago) being invited to discuss the use of portfolios on the college level at the university. While the room was the same and the participants brought similar backgrounds, job descriptions, and teaching experiences, the atmosphere was subtly different. The focus of the discussion became the practice, efficacy, limitations, and expectations, of portfolio assessment. High school teachers shared their experience, offered advice, answered questions and thought about the practicality and wisdom of portfolio assessment in a college forum, along with their college teacher colleagues. For a number of reasons, the university decided against portfolio assessment at that time, but the meeting was a success and a denouement of sorts. If you listened to an audio recording of the comments made you would simply identify the speakers as teachers of writers. Our collaboration across the boundary of high school graduation led to the other more important collaboration in our classroom, that of writer with writer, dancer with dance.

The Lens of the College Developmental Educator

It is important to remember that the original goal of the project was to try to provide students with a seamless transition from high school to college. We strove to give everyone, regardless of educational background and level of preparedness, the best possible chance to succeed. Our frequent interactions gave us the opportunity to exchange information and to learn about one another's programs and general commitment to education. The ideas and information which we shared during our workshops planted the seeds of future cooperation.

Studying the possibility of using existing high school portfolios to place students in college developmental writing classes was one of the initiatives that we explored during our long collaboration. In order to examine this possibility, we found that it was necessary to share basic information about our courses and programs. As the Coordinator of Writing Placement for the two-year open access college, it was my task to discuss our college developmental writing programs and our current method of assessment.

Because I had studied assessment-fair placement for my master's thesis, I knew the value of portfolios for our student population. In order to place students as fairly as possible into many different levels, we used a holistically graded, timed, one-hour impromptu writing sample which was based upon text. (We have always believed that the only way to measure writing ability is to measure real writing.) In addition, we used a timed, objective reading test. At that time, we gave the *Nelson-Denny Reading Test* (1981) which has since been replaced with the *Degrees of Reading Power* (1995). A combination of scores determined placement for all incoming freshmen into one of four levels of composition or one of three levels of English as a Second Language (ESL). It is significant to note that over the last several years, the trend has been for approximately sixty percent of students to place into levels below Freshman English, whereas close to forty percent of students place directly into Freshman English.

The first indication that we had much to learn about one another's programs and requirements was when I shared students' actual writing with my high school colleagues. College instructors and high school teachers alike discovered early that the root of the problem was a mutual misunderstanding about curricula and ability levels. It was evident that it would be necessary to overcome many myths. High school teachers were amazed at the disparity in our students' skill levels. In fact, we were shocked to discover that some of our college stu-

dents (albeit the weakest ones) would not have been allowed to move from junior high school to high school. The public school teachers were incredulous to learn that their "rejected" students were now our college students. College instructors were likewise surprised to learn how rigorous high school assignments were when compared to our preconceived notions.

My own admittedly incorrect assumptions were primarily due to students' comments which were often repeated throughout the years, especially when they attempted to excuse poor writing performance on placement tests. I wrongly held the high schools responsible for our freshmen's lack of preparedness; I had believed that their high school writing assignments were not as rigorous as they should be. Students planted these seeds of doubt. They swore that they never had to do expository writing, particularly when it was necessary to refer to text. Their refrain was that their writing experience instead consisted of creative writing, poetry, grammar and spelling tests.

Many students admitted to one term paper but said that they had no experience with the writing process during their high school English classes. I had long wondered why they seemed so ill prepared and challenged with even the most elementary assignments like personal narratives. I soon discovered how badly these students had misrepresented the truth of the matter concerning their writing experience. The high school teachers clearly demonstrated the difficult nature of the courses. Students were required to do expository writing, including persuasive essays and these interesting assignments were, in fact, important pieces for their portfolios. The creativity and variety of writing topics impressed most of the college instructors. High school standards were surprisingly high. No wonder they were shocked by our weakest students' essays.

Another serious misunderstanding related to grading. Once again, I was under the misguided notion that high school assessment was somewhat arbitrary. At least, this was how students represented their own situations. Students frequently claimed that our grading system was different. While they generally admitted that they knew college would be more difficult, they claimed that college writing instructors were more than harsh – that students had, in fact, never before been graded on global issues like critical thinking. They stated that the previous focus had only been on surface issues like grammar, spelling and mechanics. Once again, I was surprised to discover that I had been misled. Students had either misrepresented or misunderstood the public school grading system, particularly as it related to global issues. The high school rubrics were especially impressive and clearly

showed that there is a strong emphasis on global issues, logic, content, development and structure. In fact, our college rubric for holistically grading essays was pitiful by comparison. The public school portfolio system was particularly well conceived and developed.

Unfortunately, we ultimately decided that we would not be able to use high school portfolios for placement into college composition courses for a variety of reasons. We discovered during this process that only a small percent of our college freshmen (around eleven-percent) actually came from the urban public schools. Further, it would be logistically difficult to get the portfolios to the university. We also debated how unfair it would be to use portfolios for these students when it would not be possible to review portfolios for other students. (It is important to remember that many of our other students enter college with General Education Degrees (GED), with no high school diplomas, let alone portfolios.) We needed to do an apples-to-apples comparison in order to be fair to all students. While we had hoped for a seamless transition from high school to college, it was not meant to be. The reality of the situation was that portfolios might work out in the future, but not at that particular time.

Nevertheless, we had workshops where we shared valuable information. Besides learning generally about our programs, course offerings, and student capabilities, we were able to share specific writing assignments, strategies and rubrics. It was fascinating to compare our expectations with reality. High school and university teachers were able to engage in meaningful dialogue which enabled us to better understand requirements, goals and strategies. We realized that we shared common ground because we believe it is important to ensure success for all students, regardless of background or skill level, and we believe that it is important to both challenge students while also providing all necessary student support. It was important to shatter some myths and foster improved understanding. Both teachers and students benefited from the renewed commitment to work together.

Epilogue

No, "neighborliness" is not easy, and perhaps, in such politically charged and socially diverse arenas as rooms full of university professors and high school teachers is apt to be, it is not even natural. What pulled the two groups together was a desire to better deliver writing instruction. What cut through all the social, political, and personal agendas and allowed the important themes of our discussion to emerge was student work. As soon as the student papers lay on the table, attention turned to the writing. Arguments arose about appro-

priateness of voice, the intended audience, and clarity of message. These discussions were often heated, occasionally barbed, sometimes poignant, and usually ended in a humorous rapprochement. They were not accusatory, one-sided, or territorial. At each session, eyebrows raised in surprise, often delightedly, as one by one myths and misconceptions fell away. It was apparent that we all had the same quest: to bring all of our student writers, no matter their level, to an acceptable standard of writing competency—competency that would provide a parity of opportunity in the university and the world.

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Oral Language: The Roots of Writing in a College Developmental Classroom

Michaeline Laine

Although research describes the intricate relationships between reading and writing (Battle, 1986; Selfe, 1984; Tierney & Pearson, 1994) and other research calls for the pairing of reading and writing courses (Bartholomae & Petrosky, 1986; Hayes, 1987, 1990; Reagan, 1984), we know very little about whether students perceive these relationships. This study examined the perceptions of developmental college students enrolled in a co-taught paired reading and writing course. Rosenblatt's (1938, 1978, 1994) transactional paradigm is the theoretical framework for this study. Rosenblatt posits that reading and writing are transactions among readers, writers, and text. Writers construct texts through transactions with the developing text and meaning emerges from this transaction. The text is transformed in the process and so is the reader. Further support for the transactional paradigm generates from Barr (1985). He claims that "you learn to read by reading as a writer, and to write by writing as a reader" (p.110). Also, Battle (1986) reports "reading and writing are complementary halves of the whole written discourse and they are best learned and taught in contiguity" (p.1).

I set out to describe the perceptions of a particular group of college students during one quarter in an integrated reading and writing course. In particular, I was interested in their perceptions of the relationships between reading and writing in this setting. The most compelling finding was the power of oral language as a tool which students used to clarify their thoughts and process information as they wrote.

Methodology and Procedures

Setting

A large midwestern university offers a paired reading and writing course for academically underprepared college students. The course, titled Strategic Reading and Writing (SRW), is designed to model the type of instruction called for in current research and theory. Reading and writing are linked within the classroom for academically underprepared college students. In particular, placement tests in reading and writing suggest that these students are unprepared for the academic demands of freshmen English and other college courses. In SRW, a reading instructor and writing instructor work together to integrate reading and writing. Students enroll for one six-credit hour course. The writing component meets for 50 minutes each Monday, Wednesday and Friday and the reading component meets for 75 minutes each Tuesday and Thursday. During the writing sessions, the instructor attempts to increase students' writing proficiency with the guidance of the instructor and two in-class tutors. During the reading sessions, the major focus is on strengthening comprehension, vocabulary, and learning strategies. These strategies are taught through reading passages from a textbook designed for developmental readers and writers. The two components of the course are similar in format to the Writing Workshop and Reading Workshop outlined by Atwell (1987). In the writing component, students prewrite, draft, revise, edit, and rewrite papers. The teacher conducts mini-lessons on the conventions of writing, structures editing and revision groups for the writers, and conferences with individual writers. The topics of the students' papers are related to the reading assignments that are discussed in the reading sessions. The reading component is structured around 82 passages, poems, essays, and short stories written by students and professional writers. The text, *A Reader for Developing Writers* (Buscemi, 1993), is designed to illustrate principles and strategies that writers need to learn and includes a glossary, short biographies of the authors, explanations of reading and writing principles, questions for discussion, and suggestions for journal entries and full-length essays.

Context

Within the context of Strategic Reading and Writing (SRW), students transacted with texts as they read, discussed, and wrote within a community of learners. This community included two instructors, two in-class tutors, and the students. In the reading section of SRW, the instructor introduced the reading passages from the text through prereading activities. Vocabulary development and comprehension

strategies were emphasized. Prompts from the reading passages were the focus of freewriting in journals. The journals became the springboards for each of the four required papers.

In this course, the reading passages were also used to teach summary writing. In addition, the reading instructor also worked on study skills such as test taking skills. The reading instructor demonstrated how reading passages contained components which were to be incorporated in their writing: introductions, main ideas, details of support, and conclusions. The goal of both the reading and the writing instructor was to help students internalize reading and writing relationships.

In the writing section, the instructor used the freewritten journals from the reading section as springboards for each of the four required papers. The writing instructor focused on the writing process: prewriting activities, multiple drafts, revisions, and editing. Each paper was completed in a two-week cycle. Tutors, in the writing class on Monday and Friday each week, provided individual assistance to the students. Each Wednesday, the writing instructor taught minilessons designed to address difficulties that emerged from the students' writing, such as the conventions of grammar or techniques to write an effective introduction.

Participant Observation

As the teacher/researcher reading instructor in this two-year open-access college, I have an understanding of the program and curriculum since I co-developed the original curriculum. I selected a qualitative methodology to obtain students' perceptions of reading and writing relationships in this paired course. Reagan (1984), in her study on a paired reading and writing course, explains that "quantitative evaluations cannot adequately explain the results of various methods of pedagogical intervention nor describe exactly how they affect the student" (p. 9). My goal was to obtain the perspectives of individual students. What were their perceptions regarding the reading and writing relationships that were the basis of this integrated course?

Participants

During the course of the study, the focus moved from all seventeen students registered for Strategic Reading and Writing to three focal students. Focal students for this study were selected on the basis of patterns that emerged during the early stages of data analysis. The criteria were: (a) enrollment and attendance from the first class meet-

ing until the end of the quarter, (b) completion all of the reading and writing assignments (four journals, two summaries, complete drafts of papers one and four, final self-evaluation paper), and (c) willingness to participate in the study.

These criteria left seven possible informants to schedule for interviews. After final grades were turned into the department secretary, these seven students (two white females, one black male, and four white males) were scheduled for interviews. Six out of seven students participated in the interviews. From the six interviews, three male informants, David, Shawn and Hugh (pseudonyms), became the focal subjects of this study.

David, a twenty-year-old, white male from northern Ohio, was motivated, determined, and driven by his willingness to learn. David's motivation was driven by his need to succeed and a less than successful experience at a community college in his hometown. He did not view himself as a good reader or writer. In David's initial self-evaluation journal, he wrote, "I'm an alful wrighter and would love to improve my writing and reading." David, also, viewed himself as the "world's worst speller."

Shawn was an eighteen-year-old black male from an affluent section of northern Ohio. Shawn was playful by nature; his playfulness came out in interactions with Hugh. Shawn believed that he had control of his learning. During the interview, he stated, "I think, it [learning] was what you put into it. If you put something into it, you will get something out of it." Shawn was eager to put something into his learning by coming prepared for class as a willing and self-motivated student.

Hugh was a nineteen-year old male from Long Island, New York whose self-confidence radiated from his body language and an ever present effervescent smile on his face. Hugh was the most vocal of the students in the class and had a sincere eagerness to learn in spite of his learning disability. One of Hugh's characteristics was that he had a questioning mind; no topic was off limits. Hugh asked numerous questions such as, "Why do people in this city talk so funny?" "What do you do when you get writers' block?" "Why does a summary need to be written in a hundred words or less?" With his questioning mind, desire to learn, and command of oral language, Hugh became a catalyst for class discussions.

Data Analysis Procedures

Fieldnotes, interviews, and artifacts were triangulated to gain insights into students' perceptions regarding reading and writing relationships. Fieldnotes provided information about the social interactions among the students, instructors, and in-class tutors within the classroom environment. Interviews supplied more information because the students' perceptions were articulated. Several artifacts also provided further evidence of the students' perceptions. These included (a) an initial reader/writer self-evaluation, (b) two essay test questions related to the reading and writing concepts they had learned in the paired course, (c) a journal entry about giving advice to someone, and (d) the final in-class self-evaluation essay.

Results

In this paper, I will explore a theme that emerged from the triangulated data. The most compelling finding was the power of oral language as a tool which these students used to clarify their thoughts and process information as they wrote for an actual classroom audience. For these three students, the speaking and listening components of the communicative process were interwoven with reading and writing. Speaking gave them opportunities to express their thoughts, hear the opinions of others, and negotiate meaning. Strickland (1990) reports "learning to read and write are interrelated processes that develop in concert with oral language" (p. 19). The information gleaned from the triangulated data reveals several perceptions. These informants perceived that listening to others, reading their own and someone else's text, and writing developed their writing. David, Shawn, and Hugh used all of these communicative processes as they developed as readers and writers.

Theme: Students Perceived That Reading, Writing, Listening, and Speaking Improved Their Writing

The speaking and listening components of the communicative process were interwoven with reading and writing for David, Shawn, and Hugh. Speaking gave them opportunities to express their thoughts, hear the opinions of others, and negotiate meaning. Moffett (1983) argues that most problems facing English language arts teachers do not concern spelling, punctuation, and word recognition nearly so much as thinking and speaking. He suggests that teachers provide young adults with abundant practice in oral composing and oral comprehension. The results of this study support Moffett's research in that oral language helped these three students develop their reading and writing strategies.

The Debate Thing. One of the most vivid examples of students perceiving the relationships between reading, writing, listening, and speaking became known as the "debate thing." This deserves special attention because of the focus of the theme.

With more than twenty-seven years of teaching experience, I have learned that each class takes on a life of its own. For this class, its life was what the students called the "debate thing." The concept of the debate thing, as opposed to simple discussion of the reading passages, developed on the Tuesday of the third week of the quarter. This reading class was a turning point in the quarter. The following overview provides a sense of how the reading class's environment changed for the rest of the quarter, how the debate thing was born, and how this class took on a personality of its own.

In the third week of the quarter, the writing class was in the process of writing Paper One; the reading section was supposed to start the discussion of the reading passages for Paper Two. A "normal" Tuesday class was starting with students filing in, exchanging "hellos," complaining about dorm life or the commuter parking situation, and waiting for attendance to be taken. As always, I had written the agenda for the day on the chalkboard: "Discussion of 'The Boys' by Maya Angelou and 'The Colossus in the Kitchen' by Adreinne Schwartz (Buscemi, 1993), and Homework for Tomorrow: Read Buscemi pp. 154-159, Sentence Structure: Emphasis; Bring *Pocket Style Manual* to class."

After I took attendance, Heather, the practicum intern from the College of Education, assigned the reading and writing sections of this Strategic Reading and Writing II class, and I confirmed the day's activities. Our plan was that I would lead the discussion of "The Boys;" Heather would lead the discussion of "Colossus in the Kitchen."

The students were asked to get out a piece of paper to write something about the day's assigned readings. They were asked to write whether they liked or disliked the readings or if they had a question about the passage. According to Gullette (1992), having the students write a few sentences on a topic or question implies to the student that the topic is serious and complex. While the students were involved in this activity, Hugh and Shawn talked to each other, laughed, and started to write. They had started to develop a relationship. Shawn saw this relationship as fun, one in which he "disagre[ed] with Hugh on everything." It was a relationship based upon mutual respect, but they agreed to disagree about any topic under discussion just for the fun of it.

I started the discussion of Maya Angelou's "The Boys," an excerpt from Maya Angelou's (1969) book, *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*. In hopes of activating students' schema (Anderson and Pearson, 1984) and to provide a better understanding of Maya Angelou's life, I asked, "Who was Maya Angelou?" As Hugh glanced at his fellow classmates for some community support for his lack of knowledge, he responded, "I never heard of her." Shawn replied, "She wrote a book about her life and her mother sent her away because she did not want her." Curt, who was normally quiet, stated, "She was raped by her uncle." Hugh loudly proclaimed, "I still have never heard of her!" The discussion continued about the book and Maya Angelou's experiences with racism and discrimination. The students also shared personal experiences about racism and discrimination and asked questions.

Sherrie, from a middle-class, predominantly white suburb of this city, questioned, "What I don't understand is why it is okay for a black person to call someone the 'N' word but it is not okay for me to call someone the 'N' word. At this point, Pandora's Box was opened and there was no going back to discuss the thesis and main points of "The Boys."

Sherrie's question led to more questions and this discussion about interracial dating.

Shawn: "I have white friends but I would never date a white girl."

Sammie: "I don't understand what Shawn is saying. What is the difference?"

Barry: "You are prejudiced and have just discriminated yourself. You are stereotyping as bad as all blacks are slow and like watermelon."

Shawn: "I am black, and I hate watermelon."

Barry: "That is what I am saying. If you are black or any color, you do not fit into any categories."

As the class continued, I started to write a list on the chalkboard: "power, prejudice, equality, Who are they?, generalizations, stereotyping, degrees of prejudice, acceptance." A major debate was transpiring among the students except for David, Jack, and Curt, even though I made an attempt to hear their opinions. These three students declined to share their opinions with the class. However, since David and Curt sat next to each other, they periodically whispered to one another.

The students were thinking, yelling, discussing, debating, and asking that people listen to what they had to say. Students started to raise their hands to be called upon to share their thoughts. The discussion had turned into a free-for-all with many people talking but not many listening. Heather, the practicum intern, and I exchanged glances and conversed about whether or not we would "discuss" the passage from today's agenda. At this point, the passages seemed irrelevant and pointless to me. The discussion roared on; I closed the classroom door. Sammie stated again, "I still do not understand why Shawn would not date a white girl."

Hugh and Shawn started into a major debate about whether Shawn was prejudiced. Sammie interrupted their discussion because she still wanted an answer to her question. Barry interjected, "Everyone is prejudiced in some way." The students came to a consensus that "we" are all prejudiced in some way. Sammie still begged for an answer. Finally, Shawn stated, "I was raised that blacks should not date whites because of the problems it can bring. It is not fair to the children." The discussion worked its way into the problems for interracial children.

The emotional volcano erupted when Geoff, stood up, pounded his fist on the table, and yelled, "My father is black and my mother is white so do not tell me there are problems with the children. I am fine. You people do not know what the hell you are talking about." The classroom became absolutely silent. Hugh looked over at Geoff, smiled, and stated, "I like you, Geoff, and I am glad that you are here." Shawn and Geoff had a whispered, verbal exchange, smiled, and seemed at peace with each other.

At this point, I stated, "Today's discussion should have enabled you to think and to write about the emotional issues of discrimination, racism, and stereotyping brought up in today's discussion. When you write, you need to show your emotions and let your reader know what you are thinking. Class dismissed."

Heather and I looked at each other. We were pleased with the surprising turn of events. Our students were thinking, raising important issues, listening to other points of view, supporting their assertions with evidence, and prewriting about racism and discrimination.

After class, I found Dr. Brown, the writing instructor for this section of SRW, and shared with him what had transpired. I felt that Dr. Brown needed to be aware of the day's activities in case the issues discussed/debated continued in his class on the following day.

The next day, as previously scheduled, I observed Dr. Brown's writing class. He brought up the discussion of "The Boys." He started, "I heard that you had a rather lively and emotional discussion in reading yesterday. Your emotions could be focused in your writing. Put yourself and your feelings into your writing." After this statement, Dr. Brown cited examples about how various students were writing about their feelings and started the day's lesson on editing.

On Thursday, the following day, the term "debate thing" was invented by Hugh before the start of the reading class. Hugh entered the classroom. David and a few other students were already in their self-assigned seats. Hugh looked at me and asked, "Are we going to have the debate thing today?" Before I answered, Shawn interrupted, "Ya, are we going to have that debate thing again? I am ready."

I started the class by telling the class my thoughts about the previous day's discussion: "We had an interesting class with the sharing and expressing of many ideas and thoughts. We need to remember that we need to speak and to listen to each other, and to think as we read and write." Hugh interjected, "Cool. I agree."

In some form or another, the "debate thing" became part the normal life in the reading classes. The debates were important to the development of David's, Shawn's, and Hugh's perceptions of reading and writing because they perceived that "debating," oral language use, was an important part of understanding what they read and an important first step in their writing.

David's Perception: Reading, Writing, Listening, and Speaking Improve Writing. Although David had mixed emotions about the debates, he perceived oral communication as a way to help him think about what he wanted to say and how to say it. Early in the interview, David stated, "I really didn't like the debates especially the first one kept escalating. People kept yelling two sides." In the middle of the interview, David reported, "I don't want to knock the debates because they were so good. I guess part of that first debate just left me. It really helped me to think about what I wanted to say and how to say it." For David, the debates enhanced his communicative speaking and listening skills as he processed information and thoughts about what he wanted to say.

Near the end of the interview, I asked, "From the knowledge that you have gained in this class, what did you learn that you could apply to the 'real world' outside of Strategic Reading and Writing?" He responded, "I think, it was that debate thing and respect other

peoples' opinions. I guess, it helped me write better to try to organize the thoughts in my mind." Gullette (1992) reported that when students participated in discussions, their speaking empowered future thinking and speaking. For David, the discussions benefited him as a thinker, speaker, listener, and writer.

David also perceived writing and speaking as forms of communication. In his first journal, where he was asked to write a self-evaluation as a reader and writer and to express his expectations for the course, David was reflective and wanted changes in his writing and speaking abilities. David wrote: "Along time ago I realalized that the faster I could communicate the more relevant the point. I was making, or tring to make. At that time, I made a point to improve my wrighting and the way I talk. My speach improved but I believe my wrighting worsened." He perceived speaking and writing as techniques to improve his abilities as a communicator.

Shawn's Perceptions: Reading, Writing, Speaking, and Listening Improve Writing. Even though Shawn was actively involved in reading, writing, listening, and speaking, he perceived that writing was the most important aspect of communication. During the interview, I asked Shawn about the knowledge he gained in this course and how he could apply to the "real world." He gave an insightful response: "Writing is very important to use in communications, and to be a good communicator, you have to write well." His perceptions about the communicative process were evident during the interview, in class, and in his self-evaluative written work.

Classroom observation fieldnotes revealed that Shawn was an orator. He enjoyed the debates/discussions for a variety of reasons. Shawn liked the debates because he had fun as he disagreed with Hugh. He also learned other people's opinions which helped him to organize his thoughts and ideas. Finally, the debates helped him locate important points in the reading passages. For example, during one of the reading classes, we discussed Paul Aronowitz's "A Brother's Dream" (Buscemi, 1993), which is about a mentally healthy brother's realization that his dreams are not as important as his schizophrenic brother's dreams. This classroom interaction followed the reading.

Shawn: "I don't have any brothers or sisters so I can't relate to this story at all."

Hugh: "I can completely relate to it. I have a sister, and she's really smart. I want her to come here next year so I can protect her."

Shawn: "She'll need protection from people like you."

Hugh: "Very funny, man. Seriously, have you ever been around anybody like the sick brother? It is frightening."

Shawn: "It may be serious but my uncle has mental problems, and he doesn't frighten me."

At first, Shawn could not relate to the story since he is an only child but he "had fun" teasing Hugh. As the listening and speaking roles changed between Hugh and Shawn, Shawn realized that he could relate to the story. The discussion of this passage revealed how society treats mentally ill people. Knoeller (1994) reports on the importance of incorporating the opinions of others to help validate personal interpretations of literature. Hugh and Shawn valued each others' opinions as they clarified their own. Vygotsky (1978, 1986) and McCarthy & Raphael (1992) reported this as the social nature of learning.

Shawn believed that the class discussions helped him develop his thoughts and ideas. During the interview, Shawn stated, "I liked the discussions. We had a lot of discussions, and we got to know each other on a more personal basis. I found out what other people are thinking, and you learn their opinions and their ideas. You find out what people are thinking, and it helps you deal with them better. It gave me ideas about what other people thought on certain issues."

Shawn used the discussions as a sounding board to bounce ideas off of his classmates as he solidified his own thinking. Gullette (1992) suggests that classroom discussion should "provide enough complexity so that readers feel they have lived through a class and can draw their own conclusions about what to borrow for their own practice" (p. 39). For Shawn, the discussions enriched his own thinking because speaking and listening were assets to him as he was developing his reading and writing strategies.

Hugh's Perceptions: Reading, Writing, Speaking, and Listening Improve Writing. Hugh was the most vocal of the students enrolled in this paired course. He utilized the reading class's discussions as a forum to express himself, and it was apropos that he named the discussions as "the debate thing." Hugh voiced his perception of the debate thing during the interview: "I think that the debates were fun and interesting. One of the most important things was it helped me to write an effective paper. I knew I had to explain when I write so everyone will understand what I am trying to say." Later in the interview, I asked Hugh to describe a typical reading class. Hugh

responded, "We discussed, debated, and had conversations about what we had read. I liked to ask questions so I could answer questions that were in my mind." Finally at the end of the interview, Hugh shared his opinion of the debates. Hugh stated, "During the debate thing, things got a little harsh, but in a debate that is nothing that is the way it is going to be forever. It had nothing to do with the class. It is just the nature of the discussion." For Hugh, the debates developed his skills as a writer because he used listening and speaking to grasp audience, purpose, voice, and clarify his thoughts.

Summary: Reading, Writing, Listening, and Speaking Improve Writing. These three focal and vocal subjects all perceived a connection between oral and written language. They perceived classroom discussions and the "debate thing" as important ways to become better writers. From the students' perceptions, the oral activities aided in their thinking, learning, reading, writing, and communicating with each other. Rosenblatt (1978) argued that writing emerged from transactions among reader, writer, and text; the end result of these transactions was better writing. Through the use of oral language activities, the three focal subjects transacted with text as they activated schema to combine new knowledge with old. By orally sharing their thoughts and ideas, these three focal subjects were able to clarify their thoughts which enabled them to decide on a focus for their papers.

Even though David and Hugh felt that the "debate thing" sometimes got out of hand, it helped them to learn about other people's opinions, giving them a clearer sense of audience. From the analysis of the interviews, written work, and classroom observations, David, Shawn, and Hugh were influenced by what other people thought. They perceived that the "debate thing" influenced their writing, what they wrote, how they wrote, and how they read the writing of others.

Conclusions and Implications

Conclusions

Students' perceptions, a vital element in the classroom, are largely neglected in the research. Many developmental students, in particular, lack motivation and self-esteem; thus, they seldom perceive themselves as competent readers and writers. Developmental courses, like Strategic Reading and Writing, provide strategies for students to hold on to as they prepare for freshman English and other college courses. Also, this particular course provides students with some academic success within a community of learners.

The students in this study felt safe enough to ask questions and allow others to see their shortcomings. But, more important, these students came to realize that they were not alone; there were others in college who were academically underprepared and had similar struggles with reading and writing. Hugh and Shawn, for example, were at opposite sides of most issues; however, they always sat next to each other when we discussed issues and engaged in the "debate thing." They took pleasure in the social aspects of the class and in these academic confrontations. These three students' perceptions primarily focus on reading and writing relationships but extend to perceptions of themselves as a readers and writers within a community of learners. These three focal subjects have learned explicit concepts about writing by developing their metacognitive abilities through the use of reading, writing, listening, speaking, and thinking activities. The following are conclusions based upon the perceptions of David, Shawn, and Hugh. These three students perceived that:

1. Discussing topics, brainstorming, debating, and other oral prewriting activities helped them determine what they wanted to write.

2. The discussions in the reading section helped them to develop their ideas for papers because they learned other people's opinions. Learning the opinions of others helped them to form their own opinions and develop those opinions in their writing.

3. Oral language stimulated their thinking and helped them develop more complex concepts.

4. They felt free to express their opinions while discussing the reading passages.

Implications

This co-taught integrated course provided students with a structure for reading and writing. One of the greatest surprises in the findings is how important the discussions were to the students. It should not have been such a surprise because of the orality of most cultures. Students perceive that these oral language activities help them think through arguments and understand the reading passages; therefore, the reading passages and especially discussions are a vital part of the reading and writing processes.

After I collected data for this study, I began to use a variation of the Socratic method in our class discussions, the question-and-answer

formula employed by Socrates in Plato's *Dialogues*. This method has merit in that the students interact and share their ideas with each other. The teacher is not the catalyst for discussion, but keeps the conversation moving in a productive direction.

Therefore, on the basis of these three focal students, a curriculum designed to integrate reading and writing may help students perceive and internalize the connections between reading and writing if the curriculum is embedded with oral language activities. The use of oral language provides students with opportunities to filter through their thoughts and ideas in reading, writing, speaking, listening, and thinking activities to build upon their literacy roots as they develop their communicating strategies.

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Student Perceptions of Literacy Gains from Internet Access and HTML Home Page Construction

Ray Wolpow

Recent professional education journals are bursting with suggestions of ways to utilize the Internet and other multi-media computer technologies to enhance students' reading, writing, and communication skills (Anderson-Inman, 1996; Brie & Presti, 1996; Everhart, 1996; Harris, 1995; Harris & Pemberton, 1995; Maddux, 1996; Ryder & Graves, 1997; Veenema & Gardner, 1996; Viadero, 1997). Technology is also seen as a means to address the special literacy-learning needs of at-risk or learning disabled populations (Higgens & Boone, 1990; Kennedy, 1995; Latham, 1997; Leong, 1995; Mabrito, 1991; Mueller, 1992; Rasking, Herman, & Torgesen, 1995). Recent estimates of spending for technology in America's classrooms top five billion dollars per year (Trotter, 1997) which in turn is leading critics to ask whether reductions in class size and/or expanded hours of instruction might not be a better use for scarce educational funding (Oppenheimer, 1997; Trotter, 1997).

If the goal of literacy professionals is to maximize the possibilities for student learning with technology, educators and researchers must critically examine the intersection of technology, pedagogy, project-oriented curricula and student learning to better understand the role technology is playing in literacy learning. Student perceptions are an important variable at this intersection. This pilot study sought to gather qualitative data from secondary students enrolled in an Internet communications course about their perceptions of how Internet access affects their abilities to read, write and communicate.

Site, Research Questions and Participants

Mount Vernon High School (MVHS), a rural, AAA school, is the largest in Skagit County, Washington. Its 1,600 students represent a wide spectrum of racial and socio-economic backgrounds. It is not unusual to have, in the same class, students with computers, camcorders and extensive personal libraries at home, as well as students who cannot afford a VCR who live in homes where books, in English, Spanish or Russian are a rarity. MVHS will be one of two high schools to participate collaboratively with local historians in the Skagit County Electronic Oral History Project, for which they will gather historical photos, oral histories and artifacts from respected elders (people with historical perspective on life in their community). Students who complete "Introduction to Global Communications"(IGC), an elective one semester course in which they learn to correspond via e-mail, participate in electronic "chat-rooms" and construct HTML home pages, will be encouraged to participate in this project eventually posting the data they gather to the World Wide Web. Hence the need to answer the research question:

> What are the perceptions of students and their teachers as to how Internet access affects students' abilities to read, write and communicate with understanding?

Thirty-six students, enrolled in two Spring, 1997, sections of IGC, their teacher, a student who serves as a teacher-aid, and the administrator who supervised this area served as informants for this study.

Theoretical Framework

In qualitative research, the statement of theoretical model exists to facilitate the reader's comprehension of the "frame" in which the data are gathered and organized. The theoretical frame for this study is phenomenological and hermeneutic inquiry, the fundamental concern of which is developing an understanding of how humans perceive their worlds. Phenomenology is concerned with human perceptions, particularly the aesthetic qualities of human experience (Willis, 1991, p. 173). Phenomenology asks the question, "What is the structure and essence of experience of this phenomena for these people" (Patton, 1990, p. 69). Phenomenologists focus on the ways in which individuals endow their world with sense and meaning (Ellen, 1984, p.71). Therefore, the researcher in this study was primarily concerned with the ways students and teachers perceived the processes of reading, writing and communicating, and how these perceptions or understandings changed while using telecommunications.

In a similar vein, hermeneutics may be seen as a heuristic method or tool used to make sense of these perceptions. The name of Greek god Hermes, a deliverer of messages (text, or discourse) and cartographer of the unknown, is at the root of the Greek word *hermeneutikos*, the discipline of interpreting, expounding and unfolding. Thus, the desired outcome of hermeneutic understanding is "a participation in shared meaning" (Gadamer, 1979, p. 260). The understanding that interpretation of another's text cannot be absolutely objective is implicitly understood as part of this sharing. This is because each reader is conditioned by prejudices of his or her own historical existence. These prejudices "...are not simply a matter of time and place; rather, beyond that, they are embedded in language. They are the changing biases of various traditions that are not past and bygone... but are operative and living in every reader and every text" (Gallagher, 1992, p. 9). Consequently, bias and lack of objectivity of language are not seen as a problem to be solved, but as an invitation to consider the boundaries and limits of one's own understanding. Text then becomes, in Ricoeur's words, the "linguistic unit...that constitutes the appropriate medium between temporal experience and the narrative act" (Ricoeur, 1991, p. 33).

The researcher gathered data on the understandings and beliefs of students and teachers about reading, writing and communicating on the Internet. These data became the text or medium through which participants, researchers, and readers organized, clarified, ordered, compared parts to whole and thus made explicit their understanding of shared meaning.

Researcher's Role and Data Collection

The researcher assumed a participant-observer role during the course of this study. Informing his perceptions was his familiarity with school settings from twenty years of public school teaching, as well as the insights provided by his two graduate assistants, both of whom had attended high school in a neighboring county. One of these graduate students is fluent in Spanish, hence significant portions of her interviews were conducted in the native language of the Latino students. Adhering to the theoretical framework of phenomenological and hermeneutic inquiry, semi-structured teacher observations were collected, transcribed, and subsequently member-checked with informants.

Method

Two weeks prior to the Spring, 1997, semester, researchers conducted interviews with the IGC teacher, the supervising assistant principal and one student who had successfully completed the IGC

class. This student provided tutoring for beginning technology students and had played a significant role in the establishment of "Casa de los Bulldogs!" the Spanish language homepage for MVHS.

These interviews were audio taped and conducted using what Patton (1982) calls the "interview guide approach:"

> An interview guide is a list of questions or issues that are to be explored in the course of an interview....[It] provides topics or subject areas within which the interviewer is free to explore, probe, and ask questions that will elucidate and illuminate the particular subject. The issues in the outline need not be taken in any particular order and the actual working of questions to elicit responses about those issues is not determined in advance. (pp. 163-164)

From this data the researchers formulated questions for an attitude survey which was administered to all IGC students during the second week of the semester. Results of this survey were compiled and used to formulate the questions for interviews later conducted with students.

During the third week of the semester IGC students were assigned to create and send an e-mail letter of introduction to a graduate student at the university who in turn would reply to their letters. This provided the researchers opportunities to become familiar with students and their writing abilities. During the eleventh week of the semester students in both classes were divided into groups of six and interviewed, using the "interview guide approach" by the researchers for 55 minutes. Once again interviews were audio taped and transcribed.

These transcripts, along with field notes, were open coded, categorized, axial coded and diagrammed with assertions subsequently grounded in the data. Field notes are text written during interviews and augmented immediately upon returning to the interviewers desk. They represent the interactions and activities of the researcher and the informant (LeCompte & Preissle, 1993, p. 224). Open coding is "the process of breaking down, examining, comparing, conceptualizing and categorizing data" (Straus & Corbin, 1990, p. 61). Following Glesne and Pehskin's (1992) suggestions on how to open code, the researcher and his graduate assistants posted the research question above their work space and proceeded to cut from copies of the interview transcript and field notes those segments of the interviews which were germane. These were then pasted onto 5x8 index cards (p.128-129). Since both graduate students were novices at this procedure, we all performed this task and then sorted through the rather formidable

stack of cards. After discarding duplicates we literally shuffled the stack and created stacks of cards that were of like phenomena. We then color-coded each stack. Each color-coded stack was given a category label. A schematic diagram was created of the incidents or phenomena described on the cards of that stack.

Using the "leap to narration" method, we then generated a number of assertions about the data we had open coded and categorized. Constituted with equal parts of drudgery and intuition, this method is described by Ericson (1986):

> Force oneself, after an initial reading through the whole corpus of the filed notes and other data sources to make an assertion, choose an excerpt from the field notes that instantiates the assertion, and write up a narrative vignette reporting the key event chosen....forcing oneself at the outset to make the choices entailed in jumping into storytelling can be a way of bringing to explicit awareness the analytical distinctions and perspectives that were emerging for the author during the course of time spent in the field. (p. 151)

Straus & Corbin (1990) define axial coding as "a set of procedures whereby data are put back together in new ways after open coding, by making connections between categories. This is done by utilizing a coding paradigm involving conditions, context, action/interactional strategies and consequences" (p. 96).

Just as a surveyor locates points on a map by triangulating several sites, a qualitative researcher uses many kinds of data collection techniques to cross-check the accuracy of data collected and findings so asserted (LeCompte & Preissle, 1993, p. 48). Data for this study were triangulated among survey results, student and teacher interview results, a viewing of student web sites and the researchers' field notes.

During the seventeenth week of the semester an e-mail letter was forwarded to all students in which information on the assertions generated from the data analysis was provided with a request for responses. This process of soliciting feedback from informants on assertions is often called "member checking" by sociologists and other qualitative researchers (Miles & Huberman, 1984, p. 242).

During the eighteenth and final week of the semester a second administration of the Attitude Survey was given to check for any changes in student responses

Findings

Four assertions and a researcher's caveat were generated:

#1 Students perceive that Internet access increases the frequency with which they maintain two-way communication with both personal and professional audiences.

#2 Students perceive that Internet access is "the wave" of the future. It is their perception that their abilities to read and write printed information on the Net will become increasingly necessary to successfully function in their society, achieve their personal and professional goals, and to fully develop their knowledge and potentials.

#3 Students perceive that Internet access has a positive influence on their motivation to read and write. However, they are aware of the arguments of those who believe that reading and writing and the Internet is not truly "English."

#4 Students feel that they can express themselves more authentically and artistically, especially when constructing a web page, over the Internet. They feel more personally connected to their work, as opposed to the reading and writing they do for traditional academic subjects.

Researcher's Caveat: Computers and Networks Don't Teach, Teachers Do. Good teachers seize upon new learning opportunities to help students make significant breakthroughs.

Discussion

Assertion #1

Students perceive that Internet access increases the frequency with which they maintain two-way communication with both personal and professional audiences.

Students shared that they communicated regularly with friends and family and that these communications were far more frequent than standard notes or personal letters. Most students reported that they send and receive between four and five e-mail messages per week. Students reported using e-mail to stay in touch with friends within MVHS as well as with friends or family members who worked or attended school off campus. One student, speaking with a strong Russian accent explained,

"I live in Moscow, but I am here now as an exchange student. So writing by e-mail is practically the only way to stay in touch." A tall, Anglo, female student explained that her grandma had moved recently to Arizona to live with her aunt. "We write at least once a week." Other students wrote to their parents at work, to siblings attending university, or to friends attending other area high schools.

A Latino student explained that he had met a girl at a leadership camp two years ago. "She lives in Eastern Washington so we e-mail each other frequently." Another Latino student, in a matter-of-fact tone, reported that he corresponds regularly with a girl in Mexico. "I haven't met her. We write in Spanish and in English."

One Latino, a recent transplant from inner-city Chicago explained that he was having problems adjusting to living in "small-town" Mount Vernon. He explained how he fought off the feelings of isolation by using the skills he learned in IGC:

> I'm from Chicago so I stay in touch with my friends back there. I don't usually send very long letters because I have other work that I have to get done when I'm in the computer room. I've still got the very first [handwritten] letter that I wrote when I moved out here. I still haven't mailed it.
>
> But I have send lots of e-mail to my friends back into Chicago. When I first learned how to search the Web I went to the Chicago Public schools. Then I found my old school and the school one of my friends goes to. They had a button that you could click on with the mouse and then they got in touch with me. That's how I found their e-mail addresses.

Students also use e-mail as a means to gather information needed for school and personal goals. One student reported that she sent "e-mail stuff to schools so that [she] can check them out. Like I'm looking at colleges that I might go to. It's amazing how much you can learn. There are pictures, video, audio and the e-mail addresses of people who will answer your questions. It's kind of neat how fast you get your questions answered."

One young man was very proud to explain that he had he had received an "e-mail" from Ahmad Rashad, a television personality available at the "NBA Action Web Site." Rashad had forwarded "a bunch of stuff that I could use on my home page." Another student was working on a project and was seeking funding from Nike. " I wrote an e-mail explaining what we were trying to do at Mount

Vernon. They told me where to go to download the application form. I filled it out and e-mailed it back to them."

Not all student endeavors over the Internet can be seen as positive. One Anglo student slyly admitted that he has used "Cheat House" to complete papers for one of his classes. Cheat House is a web site at which students can exchange reports and essays. "In my mind what we are learning in social studies is a total waste of my time. So if I can find something that I can use there and return the favor by leaving something that I have written, I'm doing everyone a favor."

Assertion #2

Students perceive that Internet access is "the wave" of the future. It is their perception that their abilities to read and write printed information on the Internet will become increasingly necessary to successfully function in their society, achieve their personal and professional goals, and to fully develop their knowledge and potentials.

The ability to access and report information via the computer is seen as a strong need to succeed after graduation. From underneath his green Bulldog's baseball cap one student tells the interviewer, "Computers are everywhere now....my dad, he reads gas meters. [A few years ago] he would write down the numbers. But today he uses a computer. He just punches in the numbers." Another student, a senior at MVHS agrees. "My boss told me that in five years the job I am doing will require that I use a computer. He said that I would have to know how to use it. That's why I took the computer class." One Latina student adds, "You'll be really limited if you don't know how to use the Internet. Almost all jobs I know of, my parents, my parents friends', everybody. They all have computers in their office. We need to know how to use them if we're going to make a living."

It is the perception of these students that access to the Internet enables them to quickly acquire large quantities of information that is not readily available without a trip to a major metropolitan or university library. They also appreciate the fact that once they access this information they can use the computer to help them scan and sort the data. They appreciate desktop access to audio and video information and believe that Internet software enables them to work more independently. For example, these words from a computer "savvy" senior:

> I had to do a report on J.F.K. and I went through the four books that they have in the MVHS library. The books were this big. [Student holds thumb and forefinger about three inches apart.] But when I was on the Net I could simply type in "JFK"

> and I had thousands of articles to choose from. Then I could select key words that I was looking for and the computer would find those passages for me. Then I would highlight what was useful and copy it into my report.
>
> If you have to do a report for another class the best way to do it is to look on the Internet. You don't have to sit there and take notes. You just highlight and cut and paste. What used to take me four or five hours now takes less than two hours.
>
> On the Net you are not limited to just what is in your library. There are so many places you can go, and everything leads to something else. And there are visuals and audio. This makes it easier to understand what you are researching about.

The student who had earlier explained how computers helped him to stay in touch with friends in Chicago shares that the computer can provide help in a non-threatening way. This is especially the case if students are shy or if they have a history of conflict with teachers: "Computers have help built in. If I am doing a report in the library and I read something and I want to find out something more I need a teacher [or librarian] to help me find more. But when I am on the computer all I have to do is move the mouse to the 'help' icon and I get instructions at the stroke of a key."

It was the perception of these students that their ability to function in society will be enhanced significantly by the level of competency that they bring to the tasks of reading and writing on the Internet. Many believe that the next generation of students will almost certainly have computer terminals at every student desk. In the words of one articulate twelfth grade student:

> Computers are the wave, the next generation. It is going to be the norm....I think my kid will be sitting in front of a computer when he goes to school. He's going to have to know this. That's why I took this computer class. I can tell you now, when I get to vote, I'll spend my tax money on computers for the classrooms.

Assertion #3

Students perceive that Internet access has a positive influence on their motivation to read and write. However, they are aware of the arguments of those who believe that reading and writing and the Internet is not truly "English."

Students' overall perceptions of the Internet and computer can be generally stated as a positive influence that motivates them to read and write for understanding. Many students find accessing the Internet to be the best way to "know what is happening now." They go on-line to find out the scores of their favorite sports teams, to listen to new releases by their favorite musical groups, or to "chat" with others who share their hobby or interest.

Several students related that reading from a textbook can be extremely boring. Many of these students report that they find the Internet "more exciting" as explained by one female student. "...this [Internet access] can be fun. It's new, its easy, and its fun." A male student sitting next to her added: "I hate spelling and I hate writing. I hate sitting and putting my face in a book all day. Now I would much rather be able to sit with a computer and interact with the images on there. I learn more that way. It is true that it is easier. It is also true that it is more fun. And when it is more fun that you will learn more. [After all] you have to read from the screen the same way that you have to read from a book."

One of the Latina students who had been quiet up to this point commented: " [The Internet] ...gets you more into it. You find more interesting things to find, so if you're reading a book, you're trying to look for a particular thing, and it just gets boring, cause you're just looking for it, but if you see pictures on the Internet, it's more, it gets your attention."

That ability of Internet hypertext to "grab" the students' attention is in that it allows students to direct their own learning. For example, the words of a twelfth grade male: "You're using your own interests to learn, instead of, like she said, an assignment where you have to do this, this, and this. ... you can just look something up and then see something that's kind of related to that, and go to that, just keep learning new stuff all the time." Another student echoed this thought by saying "In my English class you're assigned stuff to read, and whether or not it interests you, you have to read it all, very carefully. On the Internet you just go wherever you want, read whatever you want. If you don't get it, you just hit the 'back' button."

Another student offered her opinion for the first time: "I have never read a book by choice. I'm too lazy or something .... [However,] when I'm on the Internet, it's like, I will read it, I don't know why, but I just do."

A student, for whom English was a second language, felt that the use of computers had improved both her writing and reading skills: "I like to write more....I talk more with my friends by e-mail in English...in my country we, don't talk English that much....It's easier to type English than it is to speak it."

The freedom offered for self-directed learning continued to be discussed as an advantage to reading and writing in the IGC class. One eleventh grade student seemed eager to explain: "When you're writing a paper, like in English class, the teacher will give a topic to write about. You have to think about what you are going to write, try to make sense of it...whatever. When you're making a home page, you just put whatever you want on there, however, you do it."

Students seemed keenly aware of the arguments presented by many adults that computers do not belong in the classroom because they are merely expensive toys which take away from valuable instruction time. One student countered: "The reason they think we're just playing with computers is because they grew up with just books and paper. We're always going to be reading the books... But, the computer can be used for research in ways that books could never be used."

When presented with the arguments of those who oppose using computers in the classroom, many students expressed reservations on the computer's capability to have a dramatic impact on either their reading or writing. This student's thoughts were indicative of others: "You definitely have got to be able to read and write to use the Internet. But I don't think it's helped me read or write better because the computer isn't teaching you anything about reading or writing. Don't get me wrong, I think it's real important to learn how to use computers and stuff because that's going to be really important in the work world. But as far as actually being able to read what's on the screen, you know, what is written, I don't think it's an improvement."

Another student made the distinction between instruction in reading and writing and using the computer to read and write: "I learned to read and write long before I learned how to use the Internet, so I don't see how it could interfere with my ability to read and write. I mean the school is still here. I mean we don't only have to research on the computer, we still have to read and we still have to write, and when we use the computer, we still have to read." This student, went on to point out the importance of a computer's human operator: "The computer must be run by someone who does the thinking. The operator has to remember how to do stuff, remember where stuff was. Computers don't operate themselves!"

Many students discussed the idea that operating a computer promotes thinking. For example, when referring to "chat rooms," one student explained: "Being in a chat room makes you a faster typist and a faster thinker. When you are in a chat room you really have to think quickly and write down what you are thinking. It is easy to lose your trend of thought. Like when you read something that the other person has written you have to think quickly and write an answer. This makes you a faster thinker."

Students were aware of other controversial issues surrounding computer use in the classroom. For example, one Mount Vernon coed was aware of the possibility of computer use negatively effecting her writing in informal situations: "When I am sending e-mail to my friends, I don't write like I do for an English teacher. I know I don't worry about punctuation and spelling. I don't punctuate everything perfectly. I don't bother to check spelling. I get a little bit lazier. But, I mean, if I was in a working setting, that would be different."

Empirical evidence supported this student's statement. The post-test scores on the Six-Trait Analytical Writing Assessment of student e-mail correspondence were significantly lower than the pre-test scores. It would appear that once students became familiar with the expectations of writers communicating via e-mail, their organization, word choice, sentence fluency and conventions were less carefully attended.

Assertion #4

Students feel that they can express themselves more authentically and artistically, especially when constructing a web page, over the Internet. They feel more personally connected to their work, as opposed to the reading and writing they do for traditional academic subjects.

Student access to the Internet while in public school is relatively new. Classes in which high school students learn to use HTML software to fashion their own homepages are even newer. Hence, educators who teach classes like Mount Vernon's IGC are pioneers shaping non-traditional curriculum. In the case of Mount Vernon High School, the teacher has devised assignments that encourage students to be self-expressive in a multi-media format. The consequence is comments like the ones that follow:

> [When I choose links for my home page] I look for anything that I like so that people who read my home page will

know what I am like. I find things that I like to do. [Were you to go to my home page] you would find a picture of Tupok and a picture of Jenny McCarthy. So, another guy might come to my home page and see this hot picture of Jenny McCarthy and he'd think: "yea, this guy is pretty cool."

You only have to write a paragraph or two on your web page. So naturally you're going to write carefully and make sure that you spell things correctly so that you make a good impression. In English class you only have the words you write to express yourself. On a web page you have images and sites you have chosen as a means to do this.

When you build a web page you get to be artistic. You get to be able to express yourself in ways that you can't in other classes. I get to choose what goes on my web page and how it is laid out.

I'm working on a home page for my school newspaper. Its purpose is to give me something to do during class. I'm including links to other newspapers that I've found. There are hundreds of newspaper web sites, but I decide which ones I want to have on there. I'm going to want to have a local newspaper for the local stories it will carry, and I will want to have a larger newspaper for the kinds of stories it will carry.

At the conclusion of the semester, the researchers viewed the web pages published to the Mount Vernon High School Home Page by these thirty-six students and were especially impressed by the organization, word choice and fluency of the students' presentations. Thoughtful transitions to links, striking words and graphics, and careful choice of color and graphics made complex ideas more comprehensible to the readers. With but a few exceptions, all pages were clear and easy to read, showing good contrast between page text, links, and the page background. All pages were spell-checked and reviewed for grammar errors. Readers with Web access are encouraged to view these pages for themselves at: [http://www.ntvernon.wednet.edu/].

Researcher's Caveat: Computers and Networks Don't Teach, Teachers Do. Good teachers seize upon new learning opportunities to help students make significant breakthroughs.

In a review of the research on successful computer mediated education, LaFrenz and Friedman (1989) argue that "'successful' teachers are 'orchestrators' who integrate and coordinate microcomputer activities with other means of instruction" (p. 224). The researchers observed the IGC's teacher's successful integration of electronic-mail events into his pedagogy. It was his careful preparation and skillful teaching which was the most important variable in shaping his student's understanding and beliefs about reading, writing and communicating with understanding on the Internet.

Conclusions

Literacy is an "autopositive" term. Like freedom, most believe we should have more of it, but rarely can groups of people agree on its definition. Loosely defined, literacy is the ability to read and write. The perceptions of the students in this study make it increasingly apparent that educators must expand their definition of literacy to include the reading and writing of not only printed texts, but also electronic texts. These students eloquently explained to the researchers how computers were being used to create and review texts, to send and receive mail, to easily access specific information in printed books, and to access large databases of texts. Through the eyes of these thirty-six secondary students we could see how access to the Internet has become an integral part of everyday experiences such as working, shopping, traveling and studying. In the words of one student, "Computers are the wave."

One thing is clear; electronic text is different than printed text. Literacy professionals, who by definition are familiar with the conventions of reading and writing printed text, need be cognizant of how this familiarity can obscure the unique characteristics of electronic text. It is easy to think of electronic texts as little more than printed texts on a computer screen. Threatening as the perceptions of the IGS students may be to those with a life-long affinity to leather bound books, educators must include the reading and writing of electronic text in their teaching and assessment of literacy. However, we must remember that in so doing, we are, at best, focusing on a moving target. Change in electronic media is exponential.

With the hope that literacy professionals will devise assessment tools which measure the ability to read and write electronic as well as printed text, we can look to the words of IGS students to understand

the differences between the media. Here are four differences noted in this study:

1) Whereas printed text cannot respond to a reader, electronic text invites response and modification. In the words of two MVHS students: "There are so many places you can go and everything leads to something else." "You can just look something up and then see something that's kind of related to that, and go to that."

2) Reading electronic text can take on the characteristics of a dialogue. "Being in a chat room makes you a faster typist and a faster thinker....Like when you read something that the other person has written you have to think quickly and write an answer. This makes you a faster thinker."

3) Whereas printed text cannot clarify itself if the reader is having trouble understanding it, electronic text can. In the words of the young man from Chicago: "Computers have help built in. If I am doing a report in the library and I read something more I need a teacher to help me find more. But when I am on the computer all I have to do is move the mouse to the 'help' icon and I get instructions at the stroke of the key."

4) Electronic texts that are written in hypertext require an "operator" skilled in thinking is this non-linear mode of reasoning. Furthermore, electronic texts employ new symbolic elements. "The computer must be run by someone who does the thinking. The operator has to remember how to do stuff, [and] remember where stuff was.... When writing a home page, students choose links that will make concepts and ideas comprehensible, make thoughtful transitions to those links, and utilize color and graphics in a way that will make their text more comprehensible.

In conclusion, this researcher cannot help but wonder if what literacy experts are experiencing with the advent of today's hypertext is unlike what the keepers of the text experienced in the days of Gutenberg.

Note: The author wishes to acknowledge the generosity of the students enrolled in Mount Vernon High School's "Introduction to Global Communications," as well as their teacher, Mr. John Sedgwick and his supervisor, Mr. Bob Bunge. Their willingness to share time and insights is deeply appreciated. Furthermore, without the time consuming and skillful gathering, sorting and analysis of data by graduate assistants Jerica Jecht and Susan Smith of Western Washington University this study could not have been completed.

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When Children Are Victims: Making the Case for Bibliotherapy

Cindy Gillespie Hendricks, James E. Hendricks

A ten-year-old faces a crisis: a father in a diabetic coma. In another part of town, a young child watches, helplessly, as her parents engage in a variety of forms of domestic violence. Meanwhile, across the street, the children are being abused and neglected; their physical scars are visible and they appear as though they have not eaten for weeks.

What is a Crisis?

In each of the aforementioned situations, there are similarities. All of the scenarios involve children facing a crisis, defined by Dixon (1979) as a "functionally debilitating mental state resulting from the individual's reaction to some event perceived to be so dangerous that it leaves him or her feeling helpless and unable to cope by usual methods" (p. 10). Dixon characterized a crisis as, "The existence of a subjectively defined precipitating event, unusual personality disorganization and impaired social functioning, debilitating emotional responses, and resolution within four to six weeks" (p.15).

Who Are Crisis Interveners?

Another similarity among each of the scenarios is that each child needs some type of assistance: someone to intervene on the child's behalf. These professionals, whose goal is "to assist crisis victims to return to their pre-crisis levels of functioning and to seek avenues for positive change" (Hendricks & McKean, 1995, p. 11), are crisis interveners. Professionals such as firefighters, correctional workers, emergency medical personnel, ministers, probation officers, parole agents,

victim advocates, teachers, school counselors, and others who come into contact with children in crisis may also be called upon to act as a crisis intervener.

What are the Types of Crises?

The nature of the crisis is another similarity in the vignettes. Erickson (1959, 1963) identified two types of crises that people may face: maturational-developmental and accidental-situational. Maturational-developmental crises occur during a transitional period of a person's life; these periods are characterized by cognitive or affective upsets. Such crises for children may include, but are not limited to, moving to a new neighborhood, school situations (beginning kindergarten, moving from elementary to middle school or from middle school to high school), peer pressure, dating, relationships, prejudice, cultural differences, ethnic group mistrust and misunderstanding, nontraditional home environments, physical maturation, and the search for identity. Each of the children in the vignettes are facing as an accidental-situational crisis. This type of crisis is characterized by periods of psychological and behavioral upsets that are precipitated by unexpected life hazards, usually involving a significant loss. For children, these crises occur frequently. Potential accidental-situational crisis situations confront children on a daily basis: substance abuse, illness, death, divorce, disabilities, crime, domestic violence, hate crimes, gang violence, and child abuse and neglect.

What are the Effects of Crises on Children?

Children have difficulty dealing with the trauma in their lives. . . often, children have less access to help in making it through such crises. Children can often mask their suffering from others, and adults can easily assume that children either do not understand the emotional impact of the crisis or are resilient enough to be unaffected (Rasinski & Gillespie, 1992).

Children can be influenced, often in negative and unforeseen ways, by events that occur within families and communities. Events such as substance abuse, death, and divorce can negatively affect children. Domestic violence, perhaps the most frequently occurring form of abuse, may be devastating to children. Hendricks (1985) states, "Research indicates that violent families are the breeding grounds for juvenile delinquency, alcohol and drug abuse, and intergenerational violence. Many of the children within these violent families become violent adults and violent parents" (p. 48). Mickish (1991) also expresses concern regarding children in violent homes: "The cost to

children is immediate and cumulative. . . Children's behavior may 'regress.' They may get poor grades because they are unable to concentrate in school or do their homework. They may act out violent behaviors toward objects, animals, siblings, and schoolmates" (p. 44).

Additional behavioral and psychiatric disorders in the child victim, particularly in intrafamilial child sexual abuse cases, may include affective problems (guilt, shame, anxiety, fear, depression, anger, low self-esteem, negative self-concept), physical complications (injuries, pregnancy, diseases), cognitive changes (short attention span), behavioral problems (misbehavior, antisocial behavior, isolation, delinquency, stealing, tantrums, substance abuse, withdrawal), self-destructive behaviors (mutilation, suicide), psychopathological behaviors (neurosis, multiple personalities), sexual behaviors (excessive masturbation, repetition of sexual acts with others, atypical sexual knowledge), social problems (interpersonal relationships), and Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (Berliner & Wheeler, 1987; Lusk & Waterman, 1986).

What are the Traditional Ways of Helping Children in Crisis?

Helping children overcome the trauma of crisis situations can be accomplished thorough the use of victim-witness assistance programs or victim advocate programs. Over 7,000 communities throughout the United States offer some type of victim assistance program (National Institute of Justice, 1992). The purpose of these programs is to minimize witness discontent with the way they are treated by the criminal justice system and social services. Specialized victim-witness assistance programs, traditional victim-witness assistance programs and victim advocate programs provide a variety of services which include crisis intervention and follow-up counseling. Many changes are being made in the techniques used in cases where children are victims. Victim-witness assistance programs have begun to use a variety of nontraditional practices in an attempt to meet the needs of children and the goals of crisis intervention.

Why Bibliotherapy?

Using a child's natural desire and interest to communicate with those in their world through language and reading as a basis (Gullo, 1994; Norton, 1991), crisis interveners and social workers (Pardeck, 1990) are adopting a nontraditional form of intervention: bibliotherapy, defined by Good (1973) as:

> The use of books to influence total development, a process of interaction between the reader and literature which is used

> for personality assessment, adjustment, growth, clinical and mental hygiene purposes; a concept that ideas inherent in selected reading material can have a therapeutic effect upon the mental or physical ills of the reader. (p. 58)

Pardeck (1990, p. 229) advocates the use of bibliotherapy with children in crisis by stating that bibliotherapy is a novel, but potentially very useful, approach for helping abused children. Cionciolo (1965) adds, "Books can provide a source of psychological relief from the various pressures and concerns that stem from the things that happen to children" (p. 898). Introducing issues through children's literature allows for discussions about issues and solutions in a nonthreatening manner. Rudman and Pearce (1988) concur, "Books can serve as mirrors for children, reflecting their appearance, their relationships, their feelings and thoughts in their immediate environment" (p. 159).

Traditional therapies in the treatment of child abuse may not be successful for several reasons: (1) children perceive the conventional methods of assessment and treatment as threatening; (2) abused children may not have the emotional and cognitive development requisite to benefit from conventional therapy, and (3) abused children fear being abused by others (Green, 1978; Naitove, 1978; Pardeck, 1990). Hollander (1989) claims "children's books are neutral vehicles for teaching about specific often-embarrassing topics such as the proper terminology for body parts, bodily functions, private zones, uncomfortable touching, and fondling" (p. 187). However, as a cautionary note, bibliotherapy cannot be used with all children, in all settings, or for all purposes. Pardeck (1990) warns, ". . . for bibliotherapy to be used successfully, other supportive therapies such as family treatment must be part of the therapeutic orientation for treating child abuse" (p. 229).

How are Materials Selected for Bibliotherapy?

One of the most important considerations when considering bibliotherapy is the selection of materials. Huck (1976) states:

> A book may be considered as suitable for bibliotherapy if it tells an interesting story and yet has the power to help a reader (1) acquire information and knowledge about psychology and physiology of human behavior, (2) learn what it means to "know thyself," (3) find an interest outside himself, (4) relieve conscious problems in a controlled manner, (5) utilize an opportunity for identification and compensation and (6) illuminate difficulties and acquire insight into his own behavior. (p. 264)

For book selection, Jalongo (1983) provides a series of questions:

1. Can children identify with the plot, setting, dialogue and characters?

2. Does the book use correct terminology, psychologically sound explanations, and portray events accurately? Is the book professionally endorsed?

3. Are the origins of emotional reactions revealed and inspected?

4. Does the book reflect an appreciation for individual differences?

5. Are good coping strategies modeled for the child?

6. Does the book present crises in an optimistic, surmountable fashion? (p. 32)

Pardeck (1990) adds that the child must be able to identify with the victimized character; therefore, books should reflect (as nearly as possible) the victim's familial situation and other critical circumstances related to the victimization. Similarities between the reader and the book character must be evident to the child.

Pardeck and Pardeck (1984, 1986) and Rubin (1978) outline the major principles of material selection:

1. Use reading materials with which the intervener is familiar.

2. Be conscious of the length of the reading materials. Complex materials with extraneous details and situations should be avoided.

3. Consider the crisis; materials should be related to the crisis, but not necessarily identical to it.

4. Consider the reading ability of the child; reading aloud to the child is acceptable if he/she can not read or has reading deficiencies.

5. Consider the emotional and chronological age of the victim.

6. Select materials that express the same feelings or mood as the victim.

Bernstein (1983) stresses that a selection of materials from which the child can choose should be provided and then the intervener should wait until the child is ready to read them.

How can Bibliotherapy be Used to Help Children in Crisis?

Bibliotherapy can be utilized in a variety of situations to deal with a variety of issues, from the relatively simple to the complex. For example, when a child is being prepared for testifying in court, books such as *Carla Goes To Court* (Beaudry & Ketchum, 1983), *The ABCs of Family Court: A Children's Guide* (Alberton, 1987), *The Judiciary: Laws We Live By* (Summer & Woods, 1992), and *To Tell the Truth* (Ogawa, 1988) may assist in acquainting the child with the courtroom, the proceedings and personnel involved in a trial. In *Carla Goes To Court*, the main character, Carla, witnesses a burglary. She tells her story to the police and then is asked to identify the suspect from a lineup. The story takes readers through the entire process from answering questions during the preliminary interviews to testifying at a preliminary hearing and a jury trial. Carla's feelings are also clearly explained which provides the opportunity for bibliotherapeutic techniques to be used. Once charges are filed and statements are recorded (written, videotaped, etc.), social workers and therapists may use bibliotherapy to help the child resolve the crisis situation.

In another example, Allison's mother has just informed her that Mary, her best friend who lives across the street, has been sexually abused by a man in the neighborhood. Allison is devastated by the news. She is afraid to go outside and cries at night. Her mother decides Allison needs assistance in understanding what has happened and what will happen to Mary and the man in the neighborhood. A crisis intervener, familiar with bibliotherapy and children's books related to sexual abuse, initiates a discussion with Allison. The intervener recommends that Allison read *Margaret's Story* (Anderson & Finne, 1986). A return visit is scheduled so that Allison and the crisis intervener can discuss the book. During the next session, the book is discussed with Allison. It is the crisis intervener's task to determine whether or not Allison has been able identify with the characters and situations in the story, and whether or not Allison can interpret the relationships between characters and their motives. The intervener monitors the child's reaction to the literature, the degree of similarity between the child's own emotional experience and the problem being considered, and the emotional experiences of the child through his or her identification with the story character. The final step is developing insight into the problem, possibly trying to encourage Allison to understand what her friend, Mary, may be going through and how she may be feeling.

How Do I Find Appropriate Books?

The aforementioned books, along with additional recommended children's books about death and dying, child abuse/neglect, and spousal abuse, are included in Appendices A, B, and C, respectively. Additional sources of children's books include: *Sensitive Issues: An Annotated Guide to Children's Literature K-6* (Rasinski & Gillespie, 1992), *The Bookfinder: A Guide to Children's Literature About the Needs and Problems of Youth Aged 2-15* (Dreyer, 1989), *A Guidebook for Bibliotherapy* (Schultheis, 1972), *Books to Help Children Cope with Separation and Loss* (Rudman, Gagne & Bernstein, 1993), *School Library Journal, Publishers Weekly, The Horn Book, Booklist, Bulletin of the Center for Children's Books* and the *New York Times Book Review*. Book lists, published by the International Reading Association in October of each year, include: Children's Choices, Young Adult Choices, and Teacher's Choices.

What Issues Cloud the Use of Bibliotherapy?

One issue that affects the use of bibliotherapy is the misperception that there is only one type of bibliotherapy. Rubin (1978) has identified three types of bibliotherapy; only one type, developmental bibliotherapy, is relevant. Developmental bibliotherapy uses both imaginative and didactic literature with individuals or groups of "normal" individuals in a crisis situation. Developmental bibliotherapeutic sessions are led by a librarian, teacher, or other helping professional to promote normal development and self-actualization or to maintain mental health through discussions of the readings. Developmental bibliotherapy can help people with common tasks (learning to get along with peers, starting a family, selecting a mate, etc.) in addition to helping people cope with individual problems such as divorce, death, and other crisis situations. Self-help books are often categorized as developmental bibliotherapeutic materials.

Another issue that affects the use of bibliotherapy is the lack of professional standards governing who should engage in bibliotherapy. Currently, there are few, if any, licensing regulations regarding who can conduct bibliotherapy. Rudman, Gagne and Bernstein (1993) state:

> Some feel that bibliotherapy should only be undertaken by those well-versed in psychodynamics, neurosis, and psychotherapy. Others, such as ourselves, feel that it can be and is safely undertaken by those with less sophisticated expertise in human nature: teachers, librarians, doctors, lawyers, parents, and others. . . adults who find themselves in guiding positions need not and should not feel embarrassed by their inadequate

> backgrounds in psychology. Perhaps, instead, adult guides should try to meet other obligations. These include the obligations of knowing how and when to introduce the materials, being sufficiently familiar with the materials, and knowing each child's particular situation. (p. 39)

Aiex (1993) adds:

> Whether you are a classroom teacher, a librarian, or a mental health professional, be advised that bibliotherapy must be handled with great delicacy, and not every practitioner possesses the personal qualifications to be a facilitator in the process. Those who are interested, however, should possess personal stability; a genuine interest in working with others; and the ability to empathize with others without moralizing, threatening, or commanding. (p. 1)

A final issue which must be addressed is the potential misuse of bibliotherapy. Like any strategy, practice, technique, etc., such as whole language, phonics, etc., bibliotherapy can be abused by inappropriate behaviors on the part of the facilitators. Handing a child a book about death to help him/her understand what has happened to Grandpa is inappropriate and unethical. Nearly all users and/or researchers of bibliotherapy emphasize the importance of discussion: ". . . the process of growth, change, and healing that occur in clients are not so much in the reading of material by individuals as in the guided dialogue about the material" (Gladding & Gladding, 1991, p. 8). According to Hynes and Hynes-Berry (1986), a trained facilitator uses guided discussions to help the developmental participant(s) integrate both feelings and cognitive responses to a literature selection.

Pardeck (1990, p. 231) states that involvement of the facilitator is the critical element that distinguishes bibliotherapy from the normal reading process. Rubin provides bibliotherapy practioners with a warning: there is one vital common characteristic to bibliotherapy: discussion of the material after reading. A second potential misuse of developmental bibliotherapy is to assume that it can be used with all children, in all settings, for all purposes, or that one book about death will work with every child who experiences such a loss.

What Does the Future Hold for Bibliotherapy and Children in Crisis?

In her article, entitled "The Cycle of Violence," Cathy Spatz Widom (1992) presents some startling information:

> In one of the most detailed studies of the issue to date, research sponsored by the National Institute of Justice (NIJ) found that childhood abuse increased the odds of future delinquency and adult criminality overall by 40 percent. . . being abused or neglected as a child increased the likelihood of arrest as a juvenile by 53 percent, as an adult by 38 percent, and for a violent crime by 38 percent. . . being abused or neglected in childhood increased the likelihood of arrest for females—by 77 percent over comparison group females. (pp. 1-3)

This information leads to the conclusion that strategies and practices currently employed to help children in crisis situations are not as effective as they might be. Children who are victims urgently need intervention. Hendricks (1985) states, "Individuals have two main concerns when they approach a conflict. One of these concerns is people, both themselves and other people. The second, and equally important concern, is for the resolution of the conflict" (p.33). For crisis interveners to successfully assist child victims in resolving conflicts, they need to be aware of the developmental strengths, weaknesses and characteristics of children and that when children become victims, they are thrust into a system that traditionally does not differentiate between children and adults (National Institute of Justice, 1992).

Whitcomb, Goodman, Runyan and Hoak (1994) suggest "since maternal support was consistently found to be an important factor contributing to children's psychological well-being, it follows that if personnel in the justice system direct greater attention to the mothers' needs, the mothers, in turn, will be better able to support their children" (p. 6). It would seem reasonable, then, that bibliotherapy may produce additional positive benefits. Besides helping the child victim realize that he/she is not alone, bibliotherapy could provide the link between the child victim, and the mother. If mothers and children were reading together, spontaneous discussions regarding the victimization could enhance both the victim's and mother's understanding of the crisis situation and the effects it may or may not have on each of them.

Crisis interveners, particularly social workers, have begun to endorse this strategy. In his 1989 study, Giblin found that 81% of the 206 therapists, psychologists, counselors, social workers, psychotherapists, and researchers he surveyed used bibliotherapeutic interven-

tion; 94% indicated their clients thought it was a helpful experience. These data help support the notion that it is time to either revisit or to further explore the multiple uses of children's books as a way to resolve children's crises. Rubin (1978) states "Bibliotherapy clearly is-and should be further developed as-an interdisciplinary field" (p. 18).

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Appendix A

Children's Books About Death and Dying

Aliki. (1979). *The two of them*. New York: Greenwillow Books.

The girl in this story realizes that her grandfather is getting old. She is unprepared for his death, and must learn to cope.

Bauer, M. (1986). *On my honor*. New York: Clarion.

Tony and Joel disobey Mr. Bates which results in Tony's death. Joel's guilt feelings about being with Tony when he drowned are the topic of discussion.

Bond, N. (1984). *A place to come back to*. New York: Margaret K. McElderry.

Oliver's world is turned upside down when his great-uncle dies. It is not a positive book about coping with death, but does show that not everyone copes with the loss of a loved one in the same manner.

Buscaglia, L. Ph.D. (1982). *The fall of Freddie the leaf (A story of life for all ages)*. Thorofare, NJ: Charles B. Slack, Inc.

Freddie learns about the cycle of life through his friend Daniel, another leaf. Freddie must come to terms with his fall during winter.

Byars, B. (1979). *Good bye Chicken Little*. New York: Harper and Row.

Jimmie has to explain Uncle Pete's accidental death to his mother. He recalls how his father died tragically. Jimmy learns to cope with his feelings of guild after Uncle Pete's death.

Carrick, C. *The foundling*. New York: Clarion.

Bodger, Christopher's dog, was hit by a car and killed. When Christopher went to find another dog, he had to deal with his feelings about Bodger.

Cohn, J. D.S.W. (1987). *I had a friend named Peter*. New York: William Morrow.

After he was hit by a car, Betsy's friend, Peter dies. Betsy tries to cope with her friend's death. In a question-and-answer format, the author discusses many questions children often ask about death.

Dragonwagon, C. (1990). *Winter holding spring*. New York: Macmillan.

A father's and daughter's grieving process after the wife/mother dies is the focus of this story. The author creates analogies with the four seasons, beginnings and endings, and death.

Gackenbach, D. (1975). *Do you love me?* New York: Clarion Books.

Walter spies a hummingbird and wants to capture it. While attempting to do this, Walter kills the bird. Then, with his sister's help, he learns about the needs of animals.

Gould, D. (1987). *Grandpa's slide show*. New York: Lothrop, Lee & Shepard.

Douglas and Sam react differently to the news of their grandpa's death. The funeral process is explained, as is the gathering of the family at their grandma's house after the funeral. Memories of Grandpa are shared.

Graeber, C. (1982). *Mustard*. New York: Macmillan.

Mustard, the cat, is getting old. After Mustard gets into a fight with a dog, he dies. The family works together to cope with Mustard's death.

Hines, A. (1991). *Remember the butterflies*. New York: Dutton.

After two children find a dead butterfly, Grandfather explains the life cycle of the butterfly. The children remember what they learned about butterflies to help them cope with the loss of their grandfather.

Jordan, M. (1989). *Losing Uncle Tim*. Niles, IL: Albert Whitman & Co.

Daniel thinks his Uncle Tim is the best uncle in the world. There is only one problem; Uncle Tim is dying of AIDS. Daniel's emotions are the focus of the story.

Keller, H. (1987). *Goodbye, Max*. New York: Greenwillow.

Ben's dog, Max, dies of old age. Ben works though his grief with the help of a friend named Zach. Also discussed is the issue of replacing Max with a new puppy almost immediately after Max's death.

Lowry, L. (1977). *A summer to die*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.

Molly and Meg are sisters. Molly is dying; however, this information is never told to Meg. Meg is very jealous of all the attention Molly receives until she realizes Molly will never be coming home from the hospital.

Mellonie, B. & Ingpen, R. (1983). *Lifetimes*. New York: Bantam.

Many living things and their lifespans are explained. The authors discuss beginnings, endings and the living in between.

Paulsen, G. (1984). *Tracker*. New York: Bradbury Press.

John's grandfather is dying of cancer. John's thought processes in attempting todeal with the impending death are discussed. After an episode while deer hunting, John's views of life and death are changed.

Patterson, K. (1987). *Bridge to Terabithia*. New York: Thomas Crowell.

Jess and Leslie create Terabithia. They rule as king and queen. Jess learns to cope with the unexpected tragedy of his friend's death. The stages of mourning: denial, guilt, anger, grief, and acceptance are explained.

Powell, E. S. (1990). *Geranium morning*. Minneapolis: Carolrhoda.

Timothy and his father have a springtime tradition: hot chocolate and buying geraniums. One spring Timothy decides not to participate in the tradition; on the way home, his father is killed in an automobile accident. Timothy begins to wonder, "what if."

Rogers, F. (1988). *When a pet dies*. New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons.

Readers learn about the guilt and sadness associated with the death of something or someone close to them. The differences between sleep and death, as well as the burial process, are also explained.

Simon, N. (1986). *The saddest time*. Niles, IL: Albert Whitman & Co.

This book contains three poems about death: a young man who dies at a young age, a young boy who dies as a result of an accident, and a grandmother who dies as a result of illness. Reactions toward death and coping with death are also discussed. Many helpful ways to cope with death are suggested.

Stevens, M. (1979). *When Grandpa died*. Chicago: Children's Press.

When a bird dies, the grandfather explains death to his granddaughter. When the grandfather dies, the girl recalls what he said and uses that information to help her understand the finality of death.

Thomas, J. (1988). *Saying good-bye to Grandma*. New York: Clarion.

Suzy learns of her grandmother's death, and, through her eyes, readers learn about funerals. What happens from the time the news of a death is received until some sense of normalcy is restored is shared.

Viorst, J. (1984). *The tenth good thing about Barney*. New York: Aladdin.

Barney, the cat, has died. Funeral services are arranged by the boy and his family. He must come up with ten good things about his pet. The grieving process and the rituals associated with death, including a eulogy, are the focus of this story.

Wilhelm, H. (1985). *I'll always love you*. New York: Crown Publishers.

The death of Elfie is hard for his owner to accept. However, he is comforted in knowing that every night he told Elfie, "I'll always love you."

Appendix B

Children's Books About Child Abuse/Neglect

Adler, C.S. (1984). *Fly free*. New York: Coward-McCann.

Shari is abused, both emotionally and physically, by her mother. Her mother's verbal abuse really hurt, "the nonphysical hurts were hardest to deny."

Anderson, D. & Finne, M. (1986). *Jason's story*. Minneapolis: Dillon Press.

Jason's mother doesn't take care of him so he is placed with foster families. Eventually, after counseling and therapy, Jason moves back with his mother. Following the story is a factual discussion about abuse and the rights of children.

Anderson, D. & Finne, M. (1986). *Liza's story*. Minneapolis: Dillon Press.

Liza is home alone during the day, uncared for and unsupervised by her father. When Liza gets into trouble, a police officer learns that Liza has been neglected. Children's rights and neglect are discussed.

Anderson, D. & Finne, M. (1986). *Margaret's story*. Minneapolis: Dillon Press.

Margaret played at Thomas' house until he sexually abuses her. Margaret tells her parents what Thomas did. Her preparation for court and her appearance in court are discussed. Facts children should know, resources and a glossary are included.

Anderson, D. & Finne, M. (1986). *Michael's story*. Minneapolis: Dillon Press.

Michael is an abused child who receives assistance from a counselor. The counselor suggests family therapy for Michael and his family. Factual information is included at the end of the story.

Anderson, D. & Finne, M. (1986). *Robin's story*. Minneapolis: Dillon Press.

Robin is physically abused by her mother. After an injury, the abuse is reported and appropriate steps are taken. Definitions of physical abuse and disciplinary strategies (other than spanking) are provided.

Bawden, N. (1982). *Squib*. New York: Lothrop.

Two girls find Squib in a park. He has a bruised leg and does not talk. Kate and Robin help to save Squib from a life of abuse.

Colidge, O. (1970). *Come by here*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.

Upon the death of Minty's parents, she is shuffled from one abusive relative to another. Only when Minty is taken to her grandmother's house does the abuse end.

Dahl, R. (1984). *Boy: Tales of childhood*. New York: Farrar.

The author tells of his experiences as an abused child at a boarding school.

Dolan, E. (1980). *Child abuse*. New York: Watts.

Physical and sexual abuse are discussed in terms that young children may understand.

Hall, L. (1984). *The boy in the off-white hat*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons.

Shane is sexually abused while on a fishing trip with a family friend. The emotional turmoil Shane experiences is presented in this story.

Hunt, I. (1976). *The lottery rose*. New York: Scribner's.

Georgie is afraid to go home at night because he is abused. When he is nearly killed, neighbors and authorities step in. Georgie is sent to live with a therapeutic group.

Lee, J. & Cook, T.S. (1978). *Mary Jane Harper cried last night*. New York: Signet.

Mary Jane was being physically abused by her mother. This story tells about the abuse Mary Jane suffered, the denial of the problem, the attempts of people to help, the role of the judicial system, and the unwillingness of people to get involved in the case.

Magorian, M. (1981). *Good night, Mr. Tom*. New York: Harper and Row.

This book focuses on the emotional trauma associated with the physical abuse and malnutrition Willie has endured. Mr. Tom helps Willie recover, and sends him back to his mother as requested, only to find that Willie's mother continued her abusive ways.

Patterson, S. (1986). *No-No the little seal*. New York: Random House.

No-No, a small seal, is sexually abused by his Uncle Seal while his parents are away. After some convincing, No-No finally tells his parents and they promised Uncle Seal would never hurt No-No again.

Roberts, W.D. (1979). *Don't hurt Laurie*. New York: Atheneum.

Laurie is always having "accidents," at least that is the way her mother explains it to everyone. Eventually, after a near fatal beating, Laurie is helped by her grandmother. She also learns that her mother was abused as a child.

Sanford, D. (1986). *I can't talk about it*. Portland, OR: Multnomah Press.

Annie tells a white dove that she doesn't like her daddy sometimes. This leads to Annie's conversation with the dove about the sexual abuse she has suffered at the hands of her father. Annie explains how the abuse began, the feelings of guilt, and the fears she has about telling.

Stanek, M. (1983). *Don't hurt me, Mama*. Niles, IL: Albert Whitman & Co.

Mama and daughter used to have fun until Daddy left. Then, Mama neglects and physically abuses her daughter. The teacher and the school nurse report the abuse so that Mama can receive the help she needs.

Stewart. G. (1989). *The facts about child abuse*. New York: Crestwood House.

Historical origins of child abuse are presented in this non-fiction book. Definitions of all types of abuse are provided.

Terkel, S.N. & Rench, J.E. (1984). *Feeling safe, feeling strong*. Minneapolis: Lerner.

This book explains many types of sexual abuse. The two main issues presented are ways to avoid being sexually abused and ways to handle an abusive situation.

Wachter, O. (1983). *No more secrets for me*. Boston: Little, Brown & Co.

This book consists of several scenarios which illustrate different "strategies" used by potential abusers to sexually abuse their victims. Each of the scenarios explains how children get confused and think they did something to cause the abuse.

Winston-Hillier, R. (1986). *Some secrets are for sharing*. Denver: M.A.C. Publishing.

Timmy tells his coach of his secret: he is being emotionally and physically abused by his mother. Immediately after the beatings, his mother talks of love which confuses Timmy. Coach Johnson assures Timmy that he will help and does so by notifying authorities.

Appendix C

Children's Books About Spousal Abuse

Byars, B. (1985). *Cracker Jackson*. New York: Viking Press.

Alma and her baby are being physically abused by her husband, Billy Ray. Cracker and his friend try to help her. Alma decides against going to a shelter, and is abused again. Then, she seeks the help she needs.

Sanford, D. (1989). *In our neighborhood Lisa's parents fight*. Portland, OR: Multnomah Press.

Lisa's mother and step-father are emotionally and physically abusive to her and her brothers. Lisa says her stepfather is trying to teach the children to respect authority, but Lisa believes they are just learning to be afraid. The children have a difficult time understanding why their parents treat them as they do. Eventually, they seek help.

Roots of and Routes to a Concept of "Literacy": Four Papers from A Problems Court Session

What is a Concept of Literacy?

Woodrow Trathen, Michael Dale

The following quotations reveal the multifaceted ways in which literacy is being thought about and discussed in public arenas and scholarly writing:

1. Literacy: There are no universal definitions and standards of literacy. . . . the most common definition—the ability to read and write at a specified age. . . . Low levels of literacy, and education in general, can impede the economic development of a country in the current rapidly changing, technology driven world. (CIA, 1996)

2. Literacy, an essential aim of education in the modern world, is no autonomous, empty skill but depends upon literate culture. Like any other aspect of acculturation, literacy requires the early and continued transmission of specific information. (Hirsch, 1987, p. xvii)

3. There ended up being little room in such a curriculum—unless the inventive teacher created it—to explore the real stuff of literacy: conveying something meaningful, communicating information, creating narratives, shaping what we see and feel and believe into written language, listening to and reading stories, playing with the sounds of words. (Rose, 1989, p. 109)

4. In an age when most Americans get most of their information from television not textbooks, pictures not print, we need a wider definition of what it means to be literate. . . . Media Literacy, then, is an expanded information and communication skill that is responsive to the changing nature of information in our society. (Considine, 1995, p. i)

5. Every 8-year-old must be able to read; every 12-year-old must be able to log on to the Internet; every 18-year-old must be able to go to college; and every adult American must be able to keep on learning for a lifetime. (Clinton, 1996)

These few quotations reveal disparate notions of what literacy means; thus we cannot assume a common conceptual understanding of what it means to *be* or *become* literate.

Literacy is a concept that has a long and varied history. What people have meant by literacy and the value they place on it have changed over time. The terms literacy, literal, literally, literary, literate, literation, literati, and literature all have in common a meaning pertaining to letters, which captures an early and to this day predominant meaning of literacy: knowledge of letters and the ability to read and write them.

Since this knowledge of letters is learned from someone, the concept literacy came to be associated with a condition respective to one's education. Literacy and schooling were linked historically; along with the institutionalization of literacy came criteria for judging one's state of literacy. But the criteria also change across time and culture, as reflected in changes in the measurement of literacy: from the ability to sign one's name, to school attendance, to achievement tests, and so on. Furthermore, we can't even assume that reading and writing always have been seen as necessary or valued components of education, even in our own western tradition. For example, in Plato's *Phaedrus* (tran. 1937) Socrates rejects writing in favor of the spoken word because writing only has the appearance of wisdom, encourages forgetfulness, cannot answer questions or clarify itself, and can be misunderstood (Kaestle, 1991). With respect to reading, the eighteenth century had its own "literacy crisis," although then the concern was too much rather than too little reading. These concerns were so great that some worried about the negative physical consequences of too much reading. Darton provides the following example (as cited in Kernan, 1990):

> Those who deplored [reading] did not simply condemn its effects on morals and politics; they feared it would damage

> public health. A 1795 tract listed the physical consequences of excessive reading: 'Susceptibility to colds, headaches, weakening of the eyes, heat rashes, gout, arthritis, hemorrhoids, asthma, apoplexy, pulmonary disease, indigestion, blocking of the bowels, nervous disorder, migraines, epilepsy, hypochondria, and melancholy.' (p. 130)

Similar contemporary concerns are echoed in discussions about watching too much TV and creating a generation of "couch potatoes."

Today we read about a different literacy crisis in America (Bennett, 1992; National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983). In a critique of this crisis mentality, Berliner and Biddle (1995) note conflicting claims: the *New York Times* reported in September 1993 that half of adults in the United States lack reading and mathematics abilities; that same month the *Washington Post* claimed that the literacy of 90 million people in the United States is deficient. The 1996 *CIA World Factbook* claims that the literacy rate for the United States is 97% while *Parade Magazine* in January 1997 reports that there are 44 million Americans who can't read and an ad for Fast Track Reading Program tells us that only 25% of our nation's children are able to read proficiently, and so it goes. Why are we bombarded with so many conflicting figures and how do we make sense of these? We argue that empirical data and conflicting claims, such as these, are worthless in the absence of a clear and consistent concept of "literacy" and, therefore, the nature of this crisis remains unclear. One obstacle to clarity is that the concept seems to be expanding. As evidence we find terms such as: emergent literacy, cultural literacy, classical literacy, occupational literacy, new workplace literacy, critical literacy, math literacy, computer literacy, media literacy, multicultural literacy, even prose literacy and document literacy, to name a few. With this kind of expansion, it becomes unclear what literacy means or which of its possible meanings one is referring to. But getting clearer is exactly what educators need to do, given the social and political ramifications of this concept.

Metaphorical Perspectives of Literacy

Sylvia Scribner (1984/1988) proposes four metaphors that are helpful in tracking the evolution of the concept of literacy and in understanding the different, even conflicting, contemporary perspectives about literacy. The most commonly applied metaphor is literacy as adaptation. In this view literacy embodies whatever literate activities a society or culture values at a particular time. For example in western culture, early writing primarily served the purpose of storing

and retrieving information that originated in speech and had been committed to memory—not for the expression of original ideas. Here the text served as a record of previous discussion, and literacy was a tool used to decode or encode a record. But one need not have engaged in this literate activity to access the information; one already knew the information or learned it in discussion. Later, religious texts came to be considered the embodiment of the message, and literate activity was associated with accurate decoding and memory of texts. Here the text contained *the* message that any reader with skill could (and should!) decipher and come to know.

More recently, texts have come to be viewed as stimuli for engagement and interpretation of a discourse that exceeds the physical boundary of the texts. Interpretation, analysis, and reflection, in addition to decoding, comprise literate activity. Mike Rose (1989) serves as an example when he describes critical literacy as "framing an argument or taking someone else's argument apart, systematically inspecting a document, an issue or an event, synthesizing different points of view, applying a theory to disparate phenomena, and so on" (p. 188).

Today some argue that a definition of "text" should include media other than printed material; that is, TV, movies, and other visual images are seen as "texts to be read." If we accept the view of TV as a text to be decoded, interpreted, and analyzed, then we can begin to understand the expansion of the term literacy to embody "media literacy." These changes in how people understand literacy reveal changes in how they understand "text" and the relationship between "reading" and text.

The metaphor of literacy as adaptation brings with it distinctions about levels of literate activity, and there are many, which become other elements that need to be understood. Asheim (1987) recognizes low and high literacy; Wormald (1977), pragmatic and cultural literacy. Richard Venezky (1990) distinguishes basic literacy from functional literacy from required literacy. Carl Kaestle and colleagues (Kaestle, 1985/1988, 1991; Stedman & Kaestle, 1991) describe levels of rudimentary, marginal, functional, and academic literacy, and label people as marginally literate or highly literate. Cipolla (1969) adds semi- and quasi-literate to the mix. Anthropologists talk of non-literate and preliterate societies, and so on. To develop a clear concept of literacy requires that we pay attention to how related concepts, such as text, levels of literacy, power, identity, and culture are understood.

Scribner's second metaphor is literacy as power. Paulo Freire's (1970a; 1970b; 1978; 1993) work is the best representation of this

metaphor. He argues that literacy creates a critical consciousness through which a community can analyze its conditions of social existence and engage in effective action for social transformation. Another illustration of literacy as power can be found in attitudes and policies regarding literacy of women and minorities: Literacy for women has been discouraged; laws were passed in the south that forbade teaching slaves to read and write. Bremner gives as an example (as cited in McGill-Franzen, 1993) an Alabama Law in 1832 that stated "Any person who shall endeavor to teach a person of color to spell, read, or write, shall be fined five hundred dollars" (p. 29). What were these legislators afraid of? Here, literacy clearly is viewed as a means to attain power and therefore as something dangerous which should be denied slaves, women, and any others perceived as a threat to existing power relations. In this perspective, literacy is seen either as disruptive or corruptive to the status quo. Plato banished the poets and the Amish (Fishman, 1988) banish particular books, technology, and ways of reading for similar reasons.

The third metaphor Scribner poses is literacy as grace. Puritans believed that reading the Bible was inextricably tied to salvation. As a result, children were forced to learn to read and write as soon as possible, to facilitate their salvation in the advent of premature death. The notion of literacy as grace entails the idea that becoming literate means becoming a better person. The idea of education as a means to improve one's soul is as old as Socrates' *Apology* (tran. 1937) and as contemporary as Oakeshott (1972):

> Education is not learning to do this or that more proficiently; it is acquiring in some measure an understanding of a human condition in which the 'fact of life' is continuously illuminated by a 'quality of life.' It is learning how to be at once an autonomous and civilized subscriber to a human life. (p. 71)

One might even conceive of E. D. Hirsch's (1987) notion of cultural literacy as a current example of literacy as grace, although a kind of academic and cultural grace that lacks the depth and humanity envisioned by either Oakeshott or Socrates. One must recognize, however, in all of these examples that the grace one achieves is not that of a hermit but rather that of a participant in a cultural community.

The fourth perspective Scribner offers, and the one she favors, is literacy as social participation, and it seems to combine elements of the other three. This point of view is represented by James Gee (1990). Literacy is more than just reading and writing; it is part of a larger discourse, which is a way of being and part of one's identity. One learns

a discourse by being enculturated into its social practices (which have been shaped historically) through scaffolding and social participation with people in the social community. Culturally, these literate activities vary and so does the concept of what it means to be literate (Scribner & Cole, 1981/1988). Andrea Fishman's (1988) analysis of Amish literate practices serves as an example:

> Until I began moving in Old Order society, I knew that, like avocational literacies, various occupational literacies existed, and I knew I was illiterate when confronted by computer, engineering, or medical texts, but those seemed tangential to the one central literacy, the kind I believed I possessed. . . . As I got to know the Fishers, however, I learned there are different core literacies as well as different occupational ones. . . . It took Anna Fisher to teach me that literacy truly is a cultural practice, not a decontextualized, universal set of skills and abilities automatically transferable across contexts. (p. 3)

In this brief quotation, we suspect that Fishman has captured a widespread view about literacy. First that there are "multiple literacies." Second that any conception of literacy is in some sense human and historical, definable within a historically human context. Third that one's identity as a person is tied in some fundamental ways to one's conception of a "core literacy."

Fishman presents a fourth assertion concerning literacy, one that again we suspect is widely held:

> 'What literacy is' is impossible to determine, for literacy is neither a monolithic condition nor a decontextualized set of discrete skills transferable across all contexts. Therefore, measuring Amish literacy against standards established by some other culture's definition—even those of academia—would not only be ethnocentric but pointless. The degree of literacy attained by an Amish individual can only be meaningfully assessed when measured against Amish literacy standards, against what counts as literacy for the Amish themselves. (p. 133)

Just as how we conceive of "text" influences how we understand "literacy," so does how we conceive of "culture." Culture is a concept that is increasingly qualified and divided (e.g., gang culture, punk culture, culture of the workplace). When literate practices are seen as cultural practices then occupational and avocational literacies, as well as "core literacies," become cultural contexts, and judgments from another "culture" become, in Fishman's words, "ethnocentric" and "point-

less." Punk or rap "cultural literacy" cannot be judged according to literacy standards drawn only from literati.

There are intellectual, theoretical, and educational implications of continuing to multiply "literacies," not all of them positive. The multiplication of literacies, especially within a school context, has the consequence of focusing attention on a narrow sets of specific skills and information, at the loss of acquiring a common set of critical, intellectual and moral dispositions, habits, character traits and attitudes. We can see this in connection with the push for "computer literacy." The emphasis at all levels of schooling, including universities, is upon acquiring specific skills in using computer technology, skills that proponents of the alleged "literacy" claim are necessary for both individual and societal competence and competition in the market place. This emphasis follows a pervasive pattern in schools of focusing on "productive skills" instead of understanding. We need only look at what happens to the visual and performing arts in schools to find evidence of this. The idea that these arts are valuable aspects of education for all students is rarely even considered, and those areas become reserved only for students with the desire and talent to *produce* works of art or *play* a musical instrument.

When literate practices are identified almost exclusively as productive skills or competencies, and the sum total of these "practices" becomes the concept "literacy," then there is a clear danger that "literacy" becomes meaningless. A contemporary example of this is how practices associated with technological advancements are being conceived of as forms of literacy. No doubt the Gutenberg press had a major influence on the concept of literacy (Manguel, 1996). And we hear similar arguments connected to the development of computer technology. However, there is an interesting disanalogy worth exploring. The Gutenberg press made available to a vast audience writings that heretofore had been confined to an elite few. Yet no one suggested that a part of this expanding literacy included knowing how to operate a printing press, or how to bind books. Why is the invention of computer technology different in this respect? Should this be the case with computers—to demand that all students know how the tool itself operates? Why should knowing how to operate a computer be deemed a form of "literacy"? Here is one of the consequences of multiplying literacies: If there is computer literacy, then why not welding literacy, sewing machine literacy, #2 pencil literacy? The concept of literacy has lost any normative, guiding force for teaching.

It is also critical to recognize (and here Fishman is right on the mark) that literacy is not simply about some rudimentary skill level of

reading and writing, or simply about increased access to information. Literacy is about our stance toward the world, toward others and toward ourselves. The Gutenberg press did not just make it more efficient to print books and therefore increase access to them. It affected people's views of themselves, others and the world around them through reading the printed word. Computers too are not just about increasing the efficiency of access to information. Relying on computer and telecommunications technology will change who we are. It is troubling that the value of this change (good or bad) seldom is being questioned (Birkerts, 1994; Stoll, 1995).

Contrary to Fishman's (1988) assertion that "'what literacy is' is impossible to determine" (p. 133), we argue that if literacy is intimately tied to peoples' views of themselves, others, and the world around them; and if literacy is to have a normative and guiding force for teachers; then it is necessary to develop a clear and coherent concept of what literacy means. In developing such a concept we recognize that judgments about what counts as being and becoming literate are inevitable. Furthermore we recognize that judgments about literacy are contextual and value laden and are linked in some instances to historic and contemporary abuses of power, leading some to suggest that we should forego all judgments concerning what it means to be literate. A similar perspective can be found regarding making judgments of literary worth. We think Denby (1996) has captured a distinction oftentimes overlooked:

> The left should stop misstating the issue of elitism; it should stop confusing the literary hierarchy and the social hierarchy. The two must be disentangled. As the late Irving Howe liked to say: To believe that some books and traditions are more worthy than others is not to endorse the inequality of American society. A literary judgment may represent class prejudice, but it is naive or dishonest to assume it represents nothing more than class prejudice. People who deny the power of aesthetic experience or the possibility of disinterested judgment may well have cynical and careerist reasons for doing so. (p. 461)

Although Denby is talking here specifically of literary judgment, the same point can be made concerning judgments about literacy. Fishman's denial that we can define literacy is a refusal to make a judgment; a refusal grounded in the belief that all such judgments must actually be reflections of class, ethnic, or racial prejudice. A "relativistic" stance such as this leads to the same result as a "conservative" belief that only if we are in the possession of absolute, immutable and ahistorical standards can we make non-prejudiced

judgments concerning what should count as literacy—in both the term literacy is rendered meaningless. The latter position leads to an inflexible and dogmatic concept of literacy. The former position leaves us without any normative concept of literacy. We believe one possible explanation for such a relativistic stance toward literacy is, as the Denby quotation suggests, a failure to make a distinction between a concept of literacy and the existence and maintenance of social injustices. However, if literacies multiply, and if the stance taken toward this conceptual multiplication is that internal standards are the ONLY valid measure of literacy achieved, then only power and prejudice are left as guides for judging. And that seems a likely means to maintaining inequalities and injustices. Is this what we want to teach prospective teachers about literacy and education?

A way out of this dilemma we believe is to recognize a second distinction between a concept of literacy and instantiations of literate practice. We think much confusion comes from not making this distinction—Fishman included. As a way to clarify the distinction we are proposing, consider "cooking" as an analogous concept. Core elements for a concept of cooking would include: the preparation of food, the use of heat, and the use of a variety of tools, to name a few. The core elements allow us to distinguish cooking from "building" or "farming," which are concepts that contain a distinct set of core elements. It is these core elements that allow us to judge what is and is not "cooking." The existence of these core elements, however, does not rule out a variety of cooking practices. For example, the kinds of foods prepared, the ways of heating, and the tools used vary widely across cultures. It ought to be possible and even desirable to conceive of literacy in a similar way; that is identify its core elements, yet allow for variations in the ways in which these core elements become realized in practice. We should not claim that only certain literate practices are valued irrespective of cultural and historical context. (This is where we get into trouble comparing across cultures.) But we also should not make the claim that all practices are literate practices—although value is determined by a social group, a culture. And finally we should not claim that there are no elements to a concept of literacy that would be central, core, and therefore in essence universal. It is important for literacy educators to explore these issues and develop a concept of literacy that holds some meaning.

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Media Literacy: The Practice of Reading Popular Culture

Donna Alvermann

At least three of Scribner's (1984/1988) metaphorical perspectives on literacy, in general, lend themselves to a discussion of media literacy, or what I am calling (after Barthes, 1972) the practice of "reading" popular culture. The metaphors—literacy as adaptation, literacy as social participation, and literacy as power—apply equally well to media literacy practices. The ability to read a wide range of textual forms in media, such as television, video, popular fiction, magazines, newspapers, popular music, and computer games, is an adaptation of what has historically been deemed necessary and sufficient for functioning in a literate society. In today's highly technical world, being literate entails knowing how to access information from a variety of print and nonprint texts and making judgments as to its accuracy and worth. Along these lines, Carmen Luke (1997), an Australian educator who has written at length on media literacy and cultural studies, describes the adaptive skills necessary for reading texts from popular culture as being primarily concerned with making students critical consumers of media messages.

Another of Scribner's (1984/1988) metaphors—literacy as social participation—argues for a perspective on reading various textual forms of popular culture that takes into account our ways of being in the world. These ways of being, or what the sociolinguist James Gee (1996) refers to as Discourses with a capital *D* to distinguish them from regular conversations, are our identity kits. They allow us to recognize and be recognized by others as having certain distinguishing characteristics. Each of us is simultaneously a member of several different Discourses; for example, as authors of these papers we are at the same time teachers, researchers, parents, husbands, wives, brothers, sisters, and so on. By donning our different identity kits as the occasion merits, we demonstrate that we have been enculturated into "doing" certain social practices, including, but not limited to, reading popular culture.

Viewing identity as a process rather than a category enables us to imagine possibilities for escaping the humanist structures in which we constantly struggle with our own and others' inclinations to engage in binary thought processes. McLaren (1995), in quoting from Homi Bhabba, points out that identity formation (whether of gender, culture, or some other socially constructed category) can never be fixed:

> Identity formation needs to occur in what Homi Bhabba calls the 'third space of translation.' Translation requires that identities . . . be seen as decentered structures that are constituted only in relation to otherness. . . . Otherness always intervenes to prevent the subject from 'fixing' itself in a closed system of meaning. . . . (p. 109)

Poststructural theories of identity suggest that there is no core, essential self—a self with a fixed gender, race, social class, and so on—that remains the same throughout time. Rather, identity is produced within relationships and therefore shifts and reforms as we construct ourselves and are constructed in relation to all the different others in our lives (Butler, 1992). It is this shifting and reforming in relation to others that makes it possible to describe media literacy as social participation. Using this metaphor refutes the familiar notion of reading as an isolated encounter between a single reader and the text he or she is attempting to understand. As British lecturers David Buckingham and Julian Sefton-Green (1994) have so aptly stated, making sense of the media entails understanding how "individual and collective identities are defined and negotiated . . . [and how] in establishing our own tastes and preferences [vis-a-vis the media], we are simultaneously defining the meanings of our own social lives and positions" (p. 38) in relation to others. For it is this process that allows each of us to interpret media images and information on the basis of what we know and want to know.

A point worth bearing in mind about the practice of media literacy is that from a social constructivist point of view, meaning does not lie in things (e.g., TV commercials, newspapers ads, Madonna, or events such as Princess Di's funeral). Nor does it lie with the author, producer, sculptor, or TV commentator; that is, meaning cannot be reduced to the intentions of its originator for the very reason that language is a social phenomenon and requires shared understandings. These shared understandings are produced within language or whatever language-like system we choose to use in representing the concepts that we want to communicate. Thinking of media literacy from a social constructionist perspective, then, frees us from the more traditional view that young people are the dupes of popular culture in all its many textual forms. Rather than spending time and effort on inoculating students against the influence of the media, Buckingham and Sefton-Green (1994) argue that we should be raising "broad questions about how young people read and use popular cultural texts, about how we might gain access to these processes, and how we might conceptualize them" (p. 18).

Finally, Scribner's (1984/1988) metaphor, literacy as power, is useful in thinking about the research studies we would need to do if we were to address the broad questions Buckingham and Sefton-Green (1994) would have us ask about young people's interpretation and use of popular cultural texts. That power relations are bound up in knowledge production, particularly in terms of media audiences, is a given. However, in cyberspace where gender identities are often intentionally masked as a means of blurring boundaries between the powerful and the not-so-powerful, it is possible to study a world where gender, race, social class, and a host of other identity markers cannot be read off the surface of our texts (Lumby, 1997). With such markers concealed, there are powerful lessons to be learned about how differences are "read" and acted upon. It is conceivable, even, that by reinventing traditional forms of knowledge and power through media literacy studies, we might eventually find answers leading to a more democratic and socially just world.

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Defining Literacy: A Caution from a Critical Conscience

Cheri Foster Triplett

No doubt, my own opportunities to access literacy as a white middle class female have helped me create the critical conscience through which I analyze the social/political implications of this literacy discussion. In the endeavor to discuss what literacy is, the discourse itself is linked to the power language that I'm seeking to deconstruct. As literacy educators, we seek to multiply our literacy constructions or narrow our definitions and thus participate in the centripetal and centrifugal forces of language (Bakhtin, 1981). Perhaps in our attempt to define and conceptualize the term "literacy," we've fallen victim to our perceived authority on the issue. As we seek to define literacy, we draw lines and create boundaries. We name who is literate and who is illiterate. Our definitions have powerful assumptions, implications, and consequences that are often social and political in nature.

Unlike Fishman (1988), I am not suggesting that we cannot say what literacy is. I am suggesting that we (a certain privileged group in society) have been saying what literacy is and is not for centuries. Furthermore, these dominant conceptualizations of literacy, tied irrevocably to literacy practice, have been used as a means of social and political domination—literacy as power (Scribner, 1984/1988).

A critical look at history reveals a literacy of elitism. In many western countries, opportunities to read and write were slowly relinquished to the masses through schooling. Western governments valued literacy for the purpose of transmitting religion, citizenship, and other cultural responsibilities (Christie, 1990). In the United States, "Americanization" was the goal of compulsory education in order to assimilate the immigrant population into the language and culture (Lave, 1996). In his critical look at Brazilian and Third World history, Freire (1970) explains that the dominant groups in society sought to communicate for the purpose of "exercising a domesticating influence" (p.112). He argues that language "cannot be reduced to the act of one person's 'depositing' ideas in another . . ." (p.70). Freire describes literacy and thought as interdependent; our human participation in language and literacy differentiates us from animals and forms our abilities to think critically.

This notion that thought and language are interdependent suggests a critical question about our literacy histories. If a dominant

group seeks to control literacy, isn't that group likewise seeking to control thought? This question raises a plethora of other questions related to our literacy definitions and practices past, present and future. This relationship between thought, language and power may seem Foucaldian and unnecessarily philosophical to some literacy educators. Perhaps a consideration of how our current literacy notions translate into pedagogical practice will help to amplify this relationship between language and power.

Delpit (1988) states:

> I have come to understand that power plays a critical role in our society and in our educational system. The worldviews of those with privileged positions are taken as the only reality, while the worldviews of those less powerful are dismissed as inconsequential. Indeed, in the educational institutions of this country, the possibilities for poor people and for people of color to define themselves, to determine the self each should be, involve a power that lies outside of the self. It is others who determine how they should act, how they are to be judged. When one 'we' gets to determine standards for all 'wes,' then some 'wes' are in trouble!" (p. xv)

If the purpose of schooling continues to be cultural transmission, we must consider whose culture is being transmitted. Lave (1996) explains that "it is the transmitter's point of view that is implicitly privileged" (p.154) in this transmission view of schooling.

Transmission of literacy in our schools certainly values the literacy practices of the mainstream, white, middle class. Culturally diverse students may come to school five years behind in these valued mainstream literacy practices. The consequences for these culturally diverse students are often placement in remediation programs (Delpit, 1988). Lave (1996) suggests that this assimilation/transmission cycle of schooling actually perpetuates the social class divisions in our country. Heath (1991) explains that literacy is for communication in the groups to which we belong and that nonmainstream students participate in many literate acts in their homes and communities. However, these literate acts are not valued in schools. She argues that the literacy behaviors of the mainstream, white, middle class, which have long dominated our education system, may no longer be adequate in today's diverse society.

As our society continues to diversify, it is necessary to consider the future of literacy. Our tools of communication are likewise diversi-

fying and we are faced with technological literacies. As we consider our past and present privileged practices of literacy, it becomes necessary to ask who has access to our technologies of reproduction (Hodder, 1994). Are our latest communication/literacy tools accessible to the masses? I ask this question as I sit in my middleclass home word processing on my new Macintosh Power PC.

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Literacy: A Socio-Cultural Perspective

Gary Moorman, Woodrow Trathen

In the opening paper of this Problems Court, Trathen and Dale explore Scribner's (1984/1988) four metaphors of literacy. The metaphor of social participation, Scribner's favorite, is the newest, and from our perspective, the most powerful. While traditional views of literacy have always been related to reading and writing skill, theorists recently have begun to argue that what makes one literate is the ability to participate in social practice. Gee (1990), for example, argues "any authentic definition [of literacy] quickly leads us away from reading and writing (literacy as traditionally construed) and even away from language, and towards social relationships and social practices" (p. 137). Historically, reading and writing have changed social relationships, as well as the shared cognition of social groups. In this paper we will provide some speculation on the nature of these changes.

In order to explore the concept of literacy as social participation, it is necessary to think more precisely about the nature of the social groups that require literate activity. Rogoff (e.g., 1994) and Lave and Wenger (e.g., 1991) provide the concept of "community of practice" (CoP) as a way of defining how learning occurs in social settings. This concept is powerful in the way it focuses on learning and other cognitive activity as a function of participation in the community. Five criteria define the CoP. First, a CoP has a set of public goals that are co-constructed and agreed to by its members. Next, a CoP possesses an array of tools, which enable a high degree of communication among members. Third, a CoP is comprised of a wide range of expertise in its membership, ranging from novice to expert; a novice is inducted into the community and becomes more expert through both formal and informal apprenticeships. Fourth, the co-construction of goals, high levels of communication, and induction of new members sustain the CoP. Finally, a CoP is held together by its discourse. An examination of its discourse will reveal its membership (community), and how the discourse functions in meaning making (epistemology), persuading (rhetoric), and constructing power relationships (ideology). In summary, a CoP is a network of individuals webbed together through a common language, set of tools, and public goals.

One of the emerging assumptions of the CoP concept is that the CoP itself must be viewed as a learning system, and that literacy must be defined in terms of both the individual activity (the traditional view) and of the collective activity of the CoP. Literacy activity on the part of

the individual is always within the context of the community, and communities, just like individual learners, can be viewed as more or less literate. In other words, the focus is on literacy "outside" the head.

From this perspective, literacy is a package containing several elements. One element revolves around tool usage. Members of a CoP know how, when and why to use tools that are appropriate for meeting the goals of the community. A second element is the cognitive activity that underlies tool use. Third, tool use and cognitive activity co-occur during goal directed social activity inherent in the CoP. Fourth, cognitive activity is a function of the Discourse (Gee, 1990) of the CoP; that is, language is the vehicle for thinking in the community. Finally, participation through language use forms the attitudes and beliefs that are the basis for personal identity with the CoP. As an example, participating in the community of medical doctors requires the use professional tools, such as reference materials like the *Physicians' Desk Reference*. This requires a particular skill in knowing how to use the tool itself (i.e., reading). In addition, it engages the doctor in a particular way of thinking and language use: To be a doctor, you must both think and talk like one. Skill use, ways of thinking, and language use are embedded in the practices of the medical community. One develops the identity of a doctor by engaging in these practices. Becoming literate in the Discourse of the CoP (Gee, 1990), then, means that in order to move into full participation in the CoP, one must acquire tool use skills, ways of thinking, language, attitudes and beliefs of expert members of the community.

A question that now arises is what kind of activity counts as "literate"? One way to address this question is to make a distinction between "low road" and "high road" learning (Salomon & Perkins, 1989; 1998). From our point of view, it is high road learning that requires literacy. Low road learning involves relatively "mindless," automatic learning, characterized by a relatively low level of awareness about the learning processes involved. Vygotsky's (1978) notion of "spontaneous concepts" also captures this idea; knowledge "acquired" in low road learning is highly contextualized in everyday activity with little need for reflection on the part of the learner or learning system. This simplifies the learning task by providing context for understanding and remembering significant concepts. However, this also limits the transferability of knowledge; since little reflection is involved, the use of knowledge acquired or constructed in low road learning is often not available in novel contexts.

In contrast, knowledge from high road learning is characterized by its transferability. Mindful management of the learning process,

conscious abstraction of principles, and explicit formulation of rule governed systems define high road learning. Vygotsky (1978) juxtaposes "scientific concepts" to the spontaneous concepts of low road learning. The power of high road learning lies in its abstract quality, which allows making connections from one situation to another. High road learning tends to be abstract and verbal; however, these qualities are also a weakness, since knowledge on the high road is often disconnected from contexts that make it meaningful and memorable in the first place.

We speculate that the evolution of communities of practice was based on a shift toward practices that required high road learning. For example, early healing practices often involved traditions where knowledge was codified and passed along through rituals. As communities could "afford" to concentrate fully on developing "systems" of healing, more and more complex understandings about medicine were developed. In order to organize these concepts into knowledge systems, another kind of "tool" was needed. Print, and its associated skills, thinking and social practices emerged. Literacy was never a means unto itself. Rather, it served the purpose of allowing one to engage in high road learning, and allowed CoPs to develop, communicate and save complex concepts. Hence, more advanced CoPs privileged reading and writing in order to engage in its Discourse. But reading and writing are only tools that mediate a deeper level of thought and different kinds of social activity. It's the package of skill in tool use, high road learning and thinking, and social participation that defines literacy, and creates what Gee (1990) calls a "social identity kit."

As cultures evolved, additional tools for engaging in high road learning and developing complex concepts emerged: mathematics, scientific inquiry and most recently computers and telecommunications. New ways of participating in culture have led to different literate practices. By looking at the practices we can track the evolution of literacy historically. We can also compare literacy practices of different cultures. These comparisons provide different instantiations of literacy, but we maintain there is an underlying set of core elements that constitute literacy: skill in tool use, cognitive activity, and language use embedded in meaningful, goal directed social activity. All of these elements form one's identity in a community. We believe that looking at literacy from this perspective will help educators bring clarity to their conceptual understanding and instruction.

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Looking For Our Literacy Roots In All the Right Places

Rick Erickson, Wayne Otto, Alice Randlett, Bernie Hayes, Tom Cloer, David Gustafson, Ken Smith

The Proposal

Two or three years ago one of the panelists started to read *The Ethnography of Reading* by Jonathan Boyarin (1992); but he soon found it was one of those books that once put down is hard to pick up again. So it sat on the shelf, unread but not forgotten.

But when Cindy announced the 1997 conference theme, "Finding Our Literacy Roots," he knew just the place to look. He dusted off the unread book, scanned the Table of Contents, read the editor's Afterword, and sampled a few chapters. But after a couple of hours, even with a well defined purpose for reading, all he'd found out was that the text just didn't seem to be very accessible. Desperate, he started to read the editor's Introduction.

Toward the end of the introduction, Boyarin shares an insight from one of his contributors: "When we concern ourselves with the ethnography of reading we are doing precisely what we study." And then he shares an insight of his own: "We still need an ethnograph of the 'solitary reader' whose stereotyping we decry, but who we spend so much of our working time being." That's when he realized that the place to find literacy's roots was in the hearts and minds of literate people. He e-mailed a colleague and they agreed that a good way to get at those roots might be to ask people to think about the books–by making their own Top Ten list, say–that had the most profound impact on the development of their personal literacy. But they were wrong.

When they tried to think of their own top ten, they both soon realized that they'd read too many books for too many reasons to ever come up with a worthwhile list. But they also found, independently, that as they looked for the roots of their personal literacy, they kept coming with "literacy events" that did have profound and memorable effects on their development as literate beings. As they shared some of these stories of significant literacy events they realized they were examining the stuff that personal literacy is made of. They were finding their literacy roots.

The Problems Court format appeared to be an appropriate way for a panel of literate people to find their literacy roots by sharing their stories of significant "literacy events." About 30 participants, including the presenters, presented an array of stories about these events. The papers that follow present an insight into the literacy roots of literate folks.

Rick Erickson's Literacy Stew

When I began searching for literacy events the right place to begin seemed to be the brain. When I approached a fellow racquetball player, who just happens to be a neurologist in the SIU School of Medicine, he was skeptical. But when I offered to be a risk free subject in his new brain mapping project he said, "Sure." Here, for the first time in public, is a scan of a professor's brain. As you can see in Figure 1 the lobes, regions, atoms, glands, and particles are labeled by their function.

Neurologists believe the relative size of the areas indicates the importance of each brain function. For example, the service commitment and new teaching idea atoms are very tiny while the need for flattery from colleagues gland and the committee avoidance lobe are quite large. Of particular importance to our literacy roots topics are the literacy roots cells, which are located just beneath the office with a window region. Those of you who are professors know that consulting fees, travel money, and offices with windows are the things we spend most of our time thinking about, so this brain scan has high face validity in this room. When the neurologist scanned my brain in depth the following script was downloaded on their computer and here is the text.

When I poke my literacy root stew the smell activates ancient memories. One sniff, and there's a 1950's *Mad Magazine* and the framed "What Me Worry?" face of Alfred E. Neumann hanging over my Carroll College bunk. Alfred's Ted Koppel look-alike face cheered me up and gave me hope during dark hours of doubt, fear, and hang

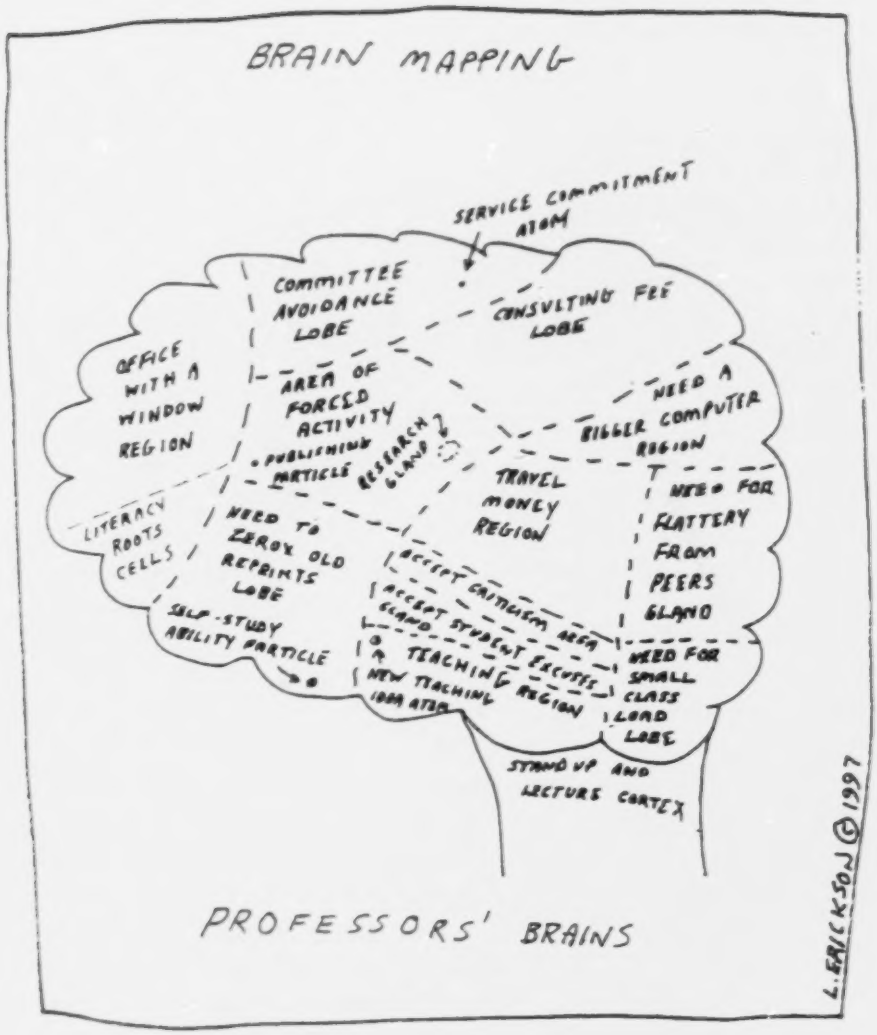
BRAIN MAPPING
SERVICE COMMITMENT ATOM
COMMITTEE AVOIDANCE LOBE
CONSULTING FEE LOBE
OFFICE WITH A WINDOW REGION
AREA OF FORCED ACTIVITY
PUBLISHING ARTICLE
RESEARCH GLAND
TRAVEL MONEY REGION
NEED A BIGGER COMPUTER REGION
NEED FOR FLATTERY FROM PEERS GLAND
LITERACY ROOTS CELLS
NEED TO XEROX OLD REPRINTS LOBE
ACCEPT CRITICISM AREA
ACCEPT STUDENT EXCUSES GLAND
SELF-STUDY ABILITY PARTICLE
A TEACHING NEW TEACHING IDEA ATOM REGION
NEED FOR SMALL CLASS LOAD LOBE
STAND UP AND LECTURE CORTEX
PROFESSORS' BRAINS
L. ERICKSON ©1997

Figure 1.

over. And there, right next to "What Me Worry?" is an old *Playboy*—a gift certificate subscription from Agnes, my mother in law, circa 1961. I remember discretely hiding them under the couch or my side of the bed to protect my crew cut, teacher clean image. An image almost tarnished in the Spring of '61 by Charlie, a sixth grade student I caught sharing his dad's *Playboys* with his classmates on the playground. When I confiscated them he startled me for a moment with his retaliation of "I'm telling everyone I found them in your car." For an instant I panicked. Did he know I had a supply back at the apartment? But I recovered quickly, grabbed the magazines, and called his mother who told me to throw them away. I tossed them, but not until I looked to see if I had missed any Gahan Wilson's weird cartoons or a good Jean Shepherd story. Both *Mad* and *Playboy* were born in the '50s, about the same time my natural supply of testosterone raced through my body. So it is no surprise that these male-oriented literacy sources were imprinted somewhere in my brain. Those old funny books supplied me with a diet of male oriented fiction and foolishness that laid the foundation for my lifelong passion for satire, humor, and good prose.

After a cautious lick I take another poke at my literacy stew and an old blueprint plat of the Country Club Addition to the City of Escanaba rises to the top. I drew that while working in the summer in the city engineer's office. My early love of drafting aimed me at architectural engineering as a freshman in college. During four college summers in the late '50s I turned surveyors' notes into inked maps that eventually became legal documents. My skills as a technical artist provided me with college money but it didn't help me in the engineering curriculum. My engineering literacy roots were killed by calculus and I switched to elementary education. Fond memories of my draftsman days remain, but I have no regrets about cutting my technical literacy engineering roots and planting new ones in the school forest.

So, I stir the old map under and there floats an old reading workbook with my name on it. It's the winter of 1948 and I am in fourth grade at the old Franklin School in Escanaba, Michigan. As I poke at the dog-eared cover I recall how my teacher, Miss Marino, rescued me from a lifetime of stupidity—a certainty when one cannot alphabetize words by the third letter in the workbook. Outside it was warm and overcast and the wet snow on the playground was just right for good snowball fights. Instead of going home, whipping icy missiles at cars, girls, and the house on Second Avenue where the witch lived, I sat sobbing in my desk, convinced I was doomed to dumbness. Miss Marino was out in the hall among the wet snowsuits settling an argument between Norman and Clyde. They both claimed ownership of a right hand leather mitt we called a chopper. After restoring the chop-

per to the original owner, she came back to the room, sat down and saved my life by showing me how to sort the words. I was amazed that even the third letter would be important to this task—and after about ten minutes of work I put all the words in the right order. Miss Marino smiled, I wiped my runny nose, ran to the cloak room, put on my overshoes, hat, coat, and gloves, and ran all the way home without even making a snowball—happily cured of my letter order disease.

The old fourth grade workbook sinks and a whole stack of reading workbooks appear in the center of the stew pot. It's the early '60s and these are my fifth grade students' workbooks that I used under the scrutiny of Mary Willett's supervisory routine in Neenah, Wisconsin. Mary liked me as a teacher. When she visited my room on my very first day as a teacher I had the kids sitting on the floor in rows doing some math problems. Someone had messed up and there were no desks in my room when school opened the day after Labor Day. Mary was impressed that I had the kids under control and could conduct school with no desks. But as much as she liked my teaching, she liked control better, and when she visited our classrooms she would always examine the reading workbooks stacked on the windowsill in the back corner. She expected teachers to use every page and correct all responses with a red pencil. Unannounced, Mary would enter the class room, say hello to the children, watch us teach for a bit, then head for the stack in the back to see if we were up-to-date on all of the correcting. If there were any pages not yet corrected, she would direct us to stay after school and catch up. She used the workbook routine to see if we were getting kids through the basal, and any kid with five 100s in row got a little certificate from her. Mary's strict workbook surveillance was widespread and whenever you saw another Neenah elementary teacher you immediately asked, "What page are you on? Are you caught up on your correcting?" I wiggled out of Mary's workbook scrutiny by approaching her with a study comparing two treatments of workbooks. The control treatment was Mary's workbook routine and the experimental treatment (my plan to avoid her surveillance) involved skipping some activities, doing others together with the kids. After one school year of my method the reading test scores showed I didn't harm the kids and Mary allowed me do the workbooks the way I wanted. As for the rest of the Neenah teachers, I do not know what happened. All I recall is that I was free to use my own judgment about what pages to do together or have the kids redo. I guess Mary trusted me and was satisfied when I kept sending her names of kids with five 100s in a row. I'm convinced that my childhood and teacher experiences are the roots of my general disdain for the dead language of workbook exercises.

Another poke in my literacy stew and look, there's *Call It Courage* and *The Kid Comes Back*—juvenile fiction I found on the shelf under the ceiling steam radiators in the basement of the Carnegie Library. In my youth I read all the Armstrong Sperry and John R. Tunis books I could find.

Tunis was a master at getting at the psychological and social dilemmas that confront athletes. As high school jock myself, fiction by Tunis was real because I was experiencing some of the same things he was writing about. Later, as a professor I read Tunis's biography and discovered he had overcome a literacy dilemma associated with formal schooling. He says that although he was a successful freelance writer all his life he never finished college because he could not pass freshmen English at New York University.

I think it is ironic that a guy who couldn't pass English could write books that got me hooked as a lifelong reader. Of course another reason I fell for reading is due to simple geography. The old Franklin School and the Carnegie town library were on the same block, separated by the playground fence and the alley. Everyone I knew went home for an hour or so at lunch time and the school doors were not opened until the bell rang. So we headed for the basement of the library where I looked for the Sperry and Tunis books on the shelf under the radiator on the south wall. Funny how the smell of that old library wafts up from the stew.

Another poke in the pot and, oh—no, there is a 1973 JER reprint of my dissertation research nested in the cover of my 1995 teacher-as-change-agent book. Before I can poke them back into the broth I see they are stuck together. Maybe it's because they are the products of the only sabbaticals I've ever had. The first one, in 1971, allowed me to finish a doctorate while the second, in 1992, gave me time to get a good start on the book. While both sabbatical leaves were productive, I fondly remember the first one when Elvira, the UW reading faculty secretary, gave me a key to the file room office down the hall from Ken Dulin's office around the corner from Dick Smith and Wayne Otto. The building housed the Air Force ROTC, and if there was no anti war bomb threat, I could park my Honda motorbike in the back, go to my office, and devote all my time to reading and writing or gazing over University Avenue at the UW dairy cows. In comparison to my hectic elementary principal work, the piece and quiet of uninterrupted time to research, read, and write was like a luxurious Vail ski vacation. After passing the preliminary exams I remember spending three weeks studying and checking out the references of one seminal article that was the basis for the dissertation. That first sabbatical, across from the UW dairy farm, planted my literacy roots in academia

forever. But at the time I had no inkling that I would soon be on my way to the wilds of West Virginia.

Another stir of my literacy stew brings a small, but potent, onion-like vegetable to the top—why it's a West Virginia wild ramp. One bite of those little devils and there is no mouthwash that will fix your breath. Instantly I taste and smell a back packing breakfast of ramps and Spam cooking on my one burner in the Dolly Sods wilderness. How did I get from that little office overlooking the UW dairy farms to a campsite in the green mountains of West Virginia? To make a long story short, a wise and good friend looked me directly in the eye one day and said, "Rick, leave town." So I did. And as far as I know I was the last reading professor in America to enter academia at the associate level with tenure. As far as I know I may be the only person in this room whose been a full professor twice but never an assistant.

A final poke in my literacy stew uncovers some papers covered with young childish writing. It's the latest work of my grandchildren Jeff, Maggie, and Nell who are well on their way to literacy. When I read to them, and they read and write to me, my diminishing grandpa-aged tastebuds are revived. Knowing that the family literacy genes are alive in the grandkids tells me that my literacy root stew is just about done. And if I know anything about my cooking, and your tastes, I'm going to have to eat it myself. Who else but the cook would eat stew flavored with funny books, work books, and real books?

Wayne Otto's Top Ten Literacy Events

When I started looking for the roots of my personal literacy, I soon got to thinking what I always get to thinking when I try to dig up the quack grass in my garden: Boy, this stuff sure is mixed up, intertwined, and convoluted. I could see that trying to do a comprehensive job of tracing my literacy roots would be as frustrating and futile as trying to trace the quack grass roots in my garden. So I decided to abandon the quack grass analogy and go with a Top Ten List instead.

These, then, are—in more or less chronological order—the Top Ten literacy events (or, in some instances, the person, place, or thing) of my life...so far. Taken together, these events are the roots of my personal literacy.

NUMBER TEN: My Little Sears, Roebuck Desk

When I was four or so—before I started school—I fell in love with a little desk and chair in the Sears, Roebuck catalog. I pestered my folks until they got it for me, and then I spent many happy hours sitting at my little desk by the window of our apartment upstairs over the Farmers' Store that overlooked busy Highway 10 and, across the intersection, the wild and wonderful Wolf River writing in my BIG 5 tablet. Since I had only vague notions about the formalities of handwriting and spelling, of course nobody else could read my stuff. No matter, though; it's how I got my start. Things haven't changed all that much. Now people could read my stuff, but hardly anybody does.

NUMBER NINE: Richard Haliburton's books of marvels

There were four grades in Mrs. VanOrmum's room when I started school—first grade through fourth—and there were a couple of cases filled with books in the back of the room. My favorite from the very start was Richard Haliburton's *Book of Marvels* and, in due time, Richard Haliburton's *Second Book of Marvels*. They were thick books with lots of pictures of people and places around the world and my heart's desire was to learn to read the words. Mrs. VanOrnum, bless her sweet soul, had the wisdom to let me keep looking at the pictures and the skill to help me learn the words.

NUMBER EIGHT: Edris Lind

When I started second grade, I somehow got the impression that I would be expected to write cursive, and only cursive, style. By then I knew manuscript, but I didn't know cursive; and I hadn't yet caught on to the fact that Mrs. VanOrnum would never expect us to perform what we hadn't been taught. I thought my brief academic career was, alas, ended, nipped in the bud. With visions of being drummed out of school in disgrace stark in my mind, I wept. Lucky for me, Edris Lind, a fourth grader and a master of the cursive style, not only took note of my distress but also took responsibility for making me whole. She spent an entire recess teaching me the basics of cursive writing; and she pointed out the handwriting chart over the blackboard where each letter was displayed in both manuscript and cursive style, just in case I forgot. Edris went on to a career in nursing, continuing to make people whole; and I went on to develop a personal style of handwriting that is as illegible as the scribbles I produced at my little Sears, Roebuck desk.

Lucky for me it wasn't Virginia Fisher, another fourth grader whom I loved from afar, who took compassionate note of my distress. With Ginny tutoring, I couldn't have given cursive writing the undivided attention it needed at the time.

NUMBER SEVEN: Schleibe's Drugs

In my home town, Mr. R. F. Schleibe was the local druggist. He kept a tall rack of comic books toward the back of his store. In those days 64 full color pages of action packed comics cost one thin dime, the tenth part of a dollar. Which may sound like a bargain today, but in those days a dime amounted to at least an hour of mowing lawn or two hours of pestering Pa for the dole. They were pricey, but we loved them and we would read any and all we could get our hands on. Lucky for us, Mr. Schleibe kept a clandestine stock of coverless comics in the back room. He was supposed to tear covers off from unsold comics, turn in the covers for credit, and destroy the rest. But benefactor of the literate arts that he was, he sold them to us for a mere two cents each! Five comics, 320 pages of action packed adventure, for one thin dime. Each of us bought what we could, and then we traded. We honed our reading skills and stretched our imaginations.

NUMBER SIX: The five little Peppers

By the time I got to fifth grade I was a frequent visitor to the Fremont Public Library, which occupied a single room in the Fremont Village Hall, and I got started reading a series of books about this family of kids, the five little Peppers, and how they grew. All I remember is that there were quite a few books in the series and that their covers were green. The stories were mindless and boring, but somehow I believed that I'd have to complete the entire series in order to maintain my good standing in academia. So I read every one of those boring, green books, in spite of the irreparable damage it did to my eyesight and my social standing amongst my peers. It took years for me to realize that meeting the challenge of the five little Peppers is what made it possible for me to persevere through the mindless and boring tasks of high school, college and graduate school.

NUMBER FIVE: Nancy Drew and Mrs. Peters

In eighth grade I experienced the joy of being a member of a literate community. Somehow the entire class, all six or seven of us, got hooked on the Nancy Drew mystery series. We read the four books that were in our library, we bought what we could, we traded, and we all sleuthed together with Nancy. We learned that different people

could experience the same story in different ways. Mrs. Peters, our teacher, had the good sense to let us go with Nancy; she was a cheerful person and a gifted teacher who saw no need to spoil our fun by insisting on developing our "taste." Mrs. Peters, bless her sweet soul, was way ahead of her times.

NUMBER FOUR: The United States Marines

The Korean War ended when I was in boot camp, so, having no need for my skills as a rifleman, the Marine Corps sent me to the Marine Corps Institute at the Navy Yard in Washington, DC. Our mission was to teach correspondence courses for Marines the world over. One of the courses I taught had to do with increasing one's reading skills, particularly speed. Up to then, in spite of the fact that I'd been an English major in college, it had never occurred to me that "reading" could or would be a specialty area in education. So one thing led to another and I wound up with a career in reading education. It all began at the Marine Corps Institute.

NUMBER THREE: Graduate School

Black walnut trees have roots that produce a substance that is toxic to many other plants. Plant a black walnut tree in your garden and you'll kill the tomatoes and lots of other stuff. I mention this here because graduate school was a black walnut insofar as my personal literacy roots are concerned. Graduate school got me reading about reading; but it effectively killed off most any other personal reading. Over the next couple of decades, I suppose I learned a few things about how, but I didn't learn or experience much of anything about why. With the insight of hindsight, I see graduate school as one of the roots of my literacy, but mainly a negative one. I don't think it has to be that way, but that's how it turned out for me.

NUMBER TWO: Jan Binkley

In 1985, ten years before I retired, Jan asked me if I'd be interested in writing the research column for the *Journal of Reading*. I said, okay, I'd give it a try. It didn't take me long to realize that "reading research" really doesn't have much of anything to do with actual reading, neither the performance of it nor the teaching of it. So I started reading real books and I started writing about what that was like, and I began to see reading in a whole different light from the one that got dimmed in graduate school. And Jan, bless her sweet heart, saw what was happening and encouraged it. Jan nurtured an important root of my personal literacy that had withered and almost died.

NUMBER ONE: Eleni

Eleni is my oldest daughter. For years she listened to my stories about Fremont, the place where I grew up. When I retired, she told me I ought to be writing those stories down, and she kept after me until I started writing them down. I like writing then down; writing them down is a whole new root to my personal literacy. I look for myself in places where I'd forgotten I'd been. But I sure do miss that little Sears, Roebuck desk.

Bernard L. Hayes Pays Tribute to John R. Tunis

A major event in my development as a reader can be traced to my discovery of a series of books in the early 1950s. I am a "reader" who must give credit for a substantial share of my literacy roots to the reading of books by John R. Tunis. I can't remember how I discovered Tunis. It may have been Mrs. McCormick, my wonderful fourth grade teacher, or the Wilson Elementary School librarian (however, most of what I remember of her is the 2 cents a day fine for overdue books that I regularly had to pay). Most likely, it was a forgotten elementary school classmate who recommended Tunis' books to me. However, once introduced to Mr. Tunis' stories, I couldn't get enough of them. I can remember checking out a new book, reading it straight through, and wondering how long it would take him to write another one.

John R. Tunis is the author of sports stories for young readers and he is one of a kind. Through his classic baseball novels of the 1940s, *The Kid from Tomkinsville, World Series, The Kid Comes Back, Keystone Kids, Highpockets,* Tunis has probably made good readers of millions of young people.

Bruce Brooks, the author of *The Moves Make the Man*, a 1985 Newbery Honor Book, paid tribute to Tunis in a 1986 commentary that appeared in *The New York Times*. While mistakenly stereotyping Tunis' books as "Boy Books," his words nevertheless clearly describe the impact certain books may have on the literacy roots of young readers and certainly the impact Tunis' books had on mine (1986).

> Tunis was born at the dawn of the Age of Reform, in 1889, in Cambridge, Mass.; he died after the sun set on the Age of Aquarius, in 1975. In between, he hustled a breathless living as the quintessential freelance writer in the golden days of American magazines, mixing reports on the Wimbledon finals, Mussolini, the working women of France and drinking habits on luxury liners, all on a single research trip if possible.

Today the journalism of which Tunis was so proud isn't around, even to wrap the fish; neither, really, are the 22 sports novels he wrote between 1938 and 1964 as a sideline. The books are mostly out of print. But any boy lucky enough to have a librarian who is slow to clear the shelves for rummage sales can find under "T" the baseball game—and the reading class—of his dreams.

Tunis' baseball books create a world intuitively known to every boy who has played catch with his father's mitt or listened to his grandfather's tales of Yanks and Dodgers of yore. The novels bring the world to life through the general literary felicities of clear language, precise characters and intriguing drama—but more than any others, they exemplify the special ways in which sports books teach boys to read well.

They make a reader want to get everything that's in that grand world of old baseball, and to get it a boy calls on tricks of intelligence he never knew he had. Tunis forces a reader to concentrate and evaluate information cunningly, because the triumph of a character never feels assured, and heartbreak might await the sucker who counts on it and cruises through the book with his lights dimmed. Tunis' commitment is to his story, and it includes surprise slumps and injuries, often just when the stage is set for heroics.

For a man who made most of his living in the world of big-time sports, Tunis is no booster. He writes about people, not celebrities, and if they are ugly or lucky instead of all-powerful, he doesn't hesitate to show it. Example: In The Kid From Tomkinsville, even when the clutch hitter Roy Tucker does get big doubles, he has no idea where he's hit the ball until his first-base coach points it out—all he feels is a blind smack of contact, and he runs in the chaos of screaming fans, scrambling fielders and his own ignorance. Nothing romantic and assured about it.

Tunis broadens his readers' attention, makes them pick up important things from unexpected sources: a key tip in the plot is as likely to come from a second-rate newspaper reporter the reader overhears around the batting cage as from the omniscient narrator. He makes his readers keep their wits and emotional balance: his characters are so moody and impetuous that a reader has to take a step back and be coolly observant, or risk sharing their misery and confusion. A reader is tempted to

share Roy Tucker's night of self-pity because his recent injury justifies such melancholia, but Tunis intends the stronger reader to see through the frustration, as Roy himself eventually does. Tunis resists what Henry James called "the platitude of statement": he makes his readers curious about things—morality, motivation, faith—that cannot be explained, instead of showing them only things that can be. These are all great lessons, not in life, not in baseball, but in reading.

Perhaps Tunis knew this secret about boys and reading: it takes a game to know a game. Reading, like baseball, is something you have to play. You pick up strange equipment (words, sentences, chapters), you wag and flex them as characters wag new bats and flex new gloves. You make a few early errors, drop a couple of subtle dependent clauses. But soon you get the hang of the game—you start to notice the foreshadowing, to feel the punch of short sentences and the stretching grace of long ones, to heft the balance between dramatic scenes and cool narration:

"Roy hesitated. He was on his toes, yet he hesitated in starting. Fear, or something stronger, that instinctive desire to protect his weakness which was now almost habit, kept him from making a sudden forward leap. Held in place a fraction of a second, he was slow off the mark. But once away, his movements were fast. Racing in, he stabbed the ball with his bare hand, whirled, and forced the runner on second back. Now the long throw to first."

As the canny old coaches begin grudgingly to say of the rookie on page 150, "Hm. This kid can play," a boy begins to admit his own new confidence and talent for what he's doing. And when the rookie breaks through with a heads-up play on page 240, proving he's arrived, the boy with the book proves the same, with no less elation and savvy. He too has become a new star, at the game he'll come to recognize more and more openly as the greatest indoor sport of them all. Who's next on the schedule? Twain? Conan Doyle? Hemingway? Bring them on—this kid can read. (p. 20)

As Rick's proposal for this Problem Court states, "The roots of our literacy were formed by "literacy events," those memorable incidents that affected our development into literate beings." Certainly, my discovery of the stories that John R. Tunis told was a literacy event that helped me become a reader.

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Tom Cloer's Appalachian Roots

I spent all my formative years in Appalachian sawmill camps. I was part of a nomadic extended family of sawmillers with camps on Turniptown Creek in the Hills of northern Georgia, on Shooting Creek in Western North Carolina, and on Stinking Creek in the high East Tennessee mountains. My home-rooted language was unadulterated Appalachian. It was really much later that I learned English as a second language.

My paternal Grandpa and Grandma, whom I worshipped, were two of my language models that I revered and tried to emulate. Grandma's folks had moved into Hanging Dog (my birthplace in Western North Carolina) and had intermarried with the Wolf Clan of the Cherokees. Grandma was uncanny when it came to catching native trout. As a constant companion, she taught me with explanations that would have been indecipherable to anyone outside the camps.

Grandma's pronoun for second person plural was "you-uns," and anything belonging to "you-uns" was "yorenses." Example: "Hits up to you-uns to git the fish; hit's yorenses job." Grandma would interchange parts of speech very easily and change verbs and nouns: "You can git you one more giftin of fish now." Or, "Fish gitten ain't settin down work." Of course the most easily recognized influence on our dialect was the Scotch/Irish influence on the "r" sound. Grandma had to "arn" her clothes for footwashing service at the Northcut Baptist Church and hang them on the "clotheswarr" (clotheswire or clothesline). She couldn't wear clothes "all gaumed up." "Meller" was one of Grandpa's favorite words. It means "beat til mellow" as in "I'll meller his head if he messes with yorenses log trucks." or "You want yore head mellered?" "Ary" was substituted for "any" and "nary" for "not any" as in: "Nary one of em wanted their heads mellered, and ary one of you'uns coulda done it."

While our isolation in the mountains affected our individualism, speech, and independence, it did not stifle imagination so critical to literacy. Our listening skills were well developed from the radio. My first viewing of a television came well after I had learned to read and had been in school several years. I can remember the anticipation of hearing such treats on the radio as: "Lum and Abner," "The Great Guildersleeve," "The Lone Ranger," and the most suspenseful pro-

gram ever, "The Screaking Door." Listening has something to do with imagination and is a similar receptive language process to reading; its early development is related to later reading achievement (Anderson, Hiebert, Scott, & Wilkinson, 1985).

Another important factor in my literacy roots was dramatization and storytelling. I can remember the dramatization of revival meetings we had witnessed where evangelists conspired and perspired, sinners jumped and ran forward, and feet were washed by the humble brethren. We "acted out" revivals, weddings, funerals, vocations (teacher, sawmiller, etc.), and anything else we could imagine.

Storytelling was a regular evening pastime. Telling haint tales was my favorite; these would start about dark. I can remember running barefoot one-half mile from one end of the sawmill camp to the other in only 15 seconds after it had grown dark and the last scary haint tale was finished. I am convinced that listening to others tell stories in those camps, and my retelling of those stories had a tremendous impact on my love of writing.

Another impact that I am sure was critical to my early literacy was the presence of verbose female cousins in the sawmill village that read to me, engaged in drama with me, told stories to me, and wrote stories in my presence. I was astonished at how glibly they did each of those things. I venerated them and tried to emulate their ways. They have since become successful entrepreneurs and own their own companies. They were intelligent, creative, and imaginative, and were good influences.

The quintessential influence, however, came from a goddess of affirmation and pedagogy called Mrs. Hipp, my first teacher in "town school." I remember vividly my first day in this big town school. With fear and trepidation, I had boarded a bus and ridden many miles from the sawmill camp to a huge brick school with more children than I thought existed on earth. These boys in town school all wore "real pants" or pants that came half-way up. I wore overalls and brogans from the sawmill commissary, a sort of Wal-Mart in a closet that the lumber company established to meet our every need. As my older brother took my sweaty hand and led me apprehensively to still another brick building, heaven opened its portals and Mrs. Hipp greeted me at the door. It was both the most frightening and the most influential moment of my life. It was to concretize forever my self-esteem, my zeal to learn, and even my sexual development. Mrs. Hipp was the most beautiful, the best-dressed, and by far the sweetest-smelling female I had ever imagined. She hadn't made her clothes; they looked like real clothes from a town store. Her eyes danced as if

she had a thousand stories to tell me. Her smile would open prison cells, mend a thousand hearts, and raise the academic dead; I wanted to marry her after that first day.

"I've been waiting to meet Tom," she beamed. "I heard he was coming and I wanted him in my class. He'll be fine here, Nat (my brother). I will put his seat up close to mine where the two of us can be close."

Mrs. Hipp was the first woman I had ever heard speak standard English, and she did so eloquently. She was a lady of high culture with a head full of sense and a heart of gold. I count myself very lucky to have crossed paths with her.

As I think back about those early literacy roots, I don't believe methodology played much of a part. What accounted for the variance was Mrs. Hipp's persona. When she was reinforcing me, the heavenly choirs would crescendo and reach their zenith as she exclaimed, "I'm proud you're in my class!" Everything she did was supernatural to me. She was patient, empathetic, always modeling how to do what she asked, and always eager to help after releasing responsibility to me. She prophesied that I and the others would do well, and then she forthrightly fulfilled her own carefully choreographed prophesies.

I am fully convinced that the single most important school ingredient in the literacy development of most young males is an olfactory variable. I am in my sixth decade of life; I was only six when I first met Mrs. Hipp. Yet, I remember to this day and will till I die the ingratiating smell of that woman. She had upon her neck and arms the sweetest nectar of the gods. Her breath was like a fragrant yellow rose blooming, flowering, and flourishing in my face. When she touched me tenderly, I had a hundred sweet passions to surge through me.

Caine & Caine (1997) point to emotions as being so critical to learning. Emotions and cognitive processes literally shape each other and can't be separated. Emotions give meaning, color meaning, and warp and weave through everything we do in schools. Mrs. Hipp knew how to create community. Our brains are social brains (Caine & Caine). Part of who I am depended on finding a way to belong in Mrs. Hipp's class. My learning was profoundly influenced by the nature of the social relationships within which I found myself in her classroom. She created true learning communities where we were valued as individuals. If we are really looking for our literacy roots in the right places, we better darn sure look toward emotion as an incontrovertibly profound, immutable, and unyielding effect in our early literary lives. I hope others were as lucky as I.

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Alice Randlet's Laryngitic Snapshot of Early Reading Highspots

Laryngitis left Alice with no voice for telling her story. Undaunted by this condition she filled a large flip chart with the following chronology, and to the delight and amazement of everyone, she pantomimed down the list with a blazing display of silent story telling! There was little doubt as to her meaning as each item was accompanied by just the right facial expression, or mouthed lip movement, or hands touching the important body part. Alice's story-telling genius was revealed as everyone in the Sandpiper room immediately knew what impact each literacy event had on Alice at each age. Here is Alice's list. You'll have to supply the pantomime.

Age	Texts and People
2	The Funnies
5	1928 *Book of Knowledge* Old parents, much older brothers (Circled for emphasis)
7	*Ladies Home Journal*
8	Nancy Drew
9	*Roller Skates* by Ruth Sawyer
12	*Forever Amber* and *Tales From the Crypt*
16	*Peyton Place* *Silas Marner* (Marked with international code for NO)

David Gustafson's Organic Literacy

1953—"Are you boys sleeping yet?" came the gruff voice from the other side of the wall. In one Olympic moment I clicked the flashlight off, collapsed the blanket cave, threw the covers back, and slid my book under my pillow while answering in an innocent voice: "Yah, Dad!" (Like how does he expect a sleeper to answer?) This was followed by another voice: "You'll strain your eyes and ruin your eyesight if you keep reading with your flashlight!"

"I'm not reading, Ma!" came my argumentative voice.

"He is too, Ma!" proclaimed Jack, my lousy older brother.

Then Pa entered the bedroom...all developmental literacy efforts ceased...for the moment at least. ZZZZZZ.

Move ahead to grade 10 (1956-57) at Salvatorian Seminary, St. Nazianz, Wisconsin where one holy boy is studying for the Catholic priesthood. Picture a large studyhall with 60 students sitting at their wooden desks intently studying since this is a STRICT studyhall where no talking or letter writing is allowed—just study. This studyhall is monitored by the very serious school DISCIPLINARIAN (That really was his title!), Father Ronald Bullingham. Transgress the rules and he is the one to inform you of your one-way bus ride home—a man to be feared! Now center in on row 3 - 5th desk. Watch the redheaded kid sitting at his desk which has a drawer in the middle and a bookshelf alongside. See the Latin grammar book and notes on his desktop. Also take note that the desk drawer is opened slightly, and though it might appear to a roving disciplinarian that "Gus" is studying his Latin diligently, his eyes are actually peering into the open desk drawer. Now peek into the drawer...VOILA! There you find the *Riders of the Purple Sage*. Zane Grey lives on! Oh, oh, here comes Father Ronald. Surreptitiously edge the drawer shut with your stomach. Back to Latin, cowboy!

So where did this shifty lying weasel wind up? What debilitating disease had permeated his psyche and destroyed his true innocence? How had this happened? On December 11, 1997, an article written by Tamara Henry titled "Literacy Skills Require Upkeep" appeared in the *USA Today* newspaper. She cited Albert Tuijman of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (a group of nations that work jointly on policies related to education). He said that literacy has been found to be ORGANIC—developing and changing over a life span rather than simply being acquired when you're young and kept

for life, like the ability to ride a bike. Obviously this stuff is like cancer. It attacks many of us, renders us defenseless, and affects us all throughout our lives.

Yup! I think I have been and still am a victim of this organic phenomenon. It has obviously taken over both my body and mind much like a creature in a Sigourney Weaver alien film. How did this happen? How did it overpower me and cause me to lie and sneak? Let me tell you my story so that you might learn from my experience and possibly remain whole.

It all started on a Sunday, two weeks before Pearl Harbor, in my parent's bedroom at 609 Lake Avenue, Ironwood, Michigan. One minute it was a family of four and the next minute—surprise—it was five! Four literates, or at least partial ones, and one totally illiterate—me. Little did I know that this was the beginning of my makeover.

Having a second grade teacher for a mother meant being surrounded by books and being read to. It meant having paper, pencils, and chalk. Early writing samples (evidence of a clear case of developmental dyslexia) are still in evidence on the inner closet walls at 609 Lake Avenue. Two books especially remembered are *Little Black Sambo*, with its moveable parts, and *Pinocchio*, which contained realistic pictures from the Disney film I had seen. Little did I know this would be my first experience with the question: Did you see the movie or read the book first?

Early school experiences included sending for a decoder ring so I could crack the code that eluded me. Fortunately, Helen Jalonen, second grade teacher supreme, entered my life and set me on course for a literate future. Or did she release an alien demon or pass on a virus to me that has possessed me ever since? I think I blame it all on my mother and Helen Jalonen who schemed together. Suddenly Dick and Jane, along with the netherworld of Golden Books, took control of me and held me in their grasp for many years.

As the organic process kept growing inside me, I became aware of the regular diet of food around my house that caused this "organic thing" to grow: *Hoofbeats Magazine* and the United States Trotting Association *Dams and Sires Yearbook* for my father, who bred and raced horses; *Better Homes and Gardens* and *Our Sunday Visitor* for my mother, and the *Ironwood Daily Globe* and the Sunday *Milwaukee Journal* for everyone. In addition, being the youngest of three boys, I was surrounded by comic books and "Big Little Books" which were about two inches thick and could fit in the palm of your hand. Rising above

all of this was Grandma and her Bible. An everyday ritual that seemed to conceal the alien within her and me.

In my later grades my organic malady dragged me to my oldest brother's Classics Illustrated which he kept locked in a trunk in the attic. Unfortunately he had mounted the hasp incorrectly and I was able to get at the comics by simply unscrewing the screws that should have been covered by the hasp. In retrospect, this seems to have been part of my training in hiding my affliction as described in the beginning of this account and also an important part of my literary development.

In high school at the seminary, Zane Grey held me captive for a year with almost an endless supply of rations for my insatiable appetite. I was totally out of control and possessed by this organic force. From there it was *Collier's Encyclopedia* and then on to the Brittanica. Soon it was the *Lives of the Saints* (well, maybe one saint) and then I was swept along by alien supporters such as Steinbeck and Vonnegut.

Later I found myself at Northern Michigan University where, as an English major, I was attacked by Cliff's Notes. From then on at other universities I was always under a steady, but uncontrollable, force-feeding from the organic force. In 1997 I reached the breaking point brought on by a 30 plus year diet of "reading about reading," termed "meta-alienation" I believe. The "organic thing" had consumed me. My only defense was to retire and come to terms with the alien within me.

Today I believe I have achieved peace with the alien. I find that I enjoy feeding him more than ever before. I have found that he is very nourished by a wide variety of magazines, especially those that feature gardening, finance, and fishing. Then again, it seems we both seem to lose track of time when devouring a good novel. In summary, be careful because something is lurking out there and it could take control of your life! It did mine.

Kenneth M. Smith's Reflections on Early Literacy Roots

Reflecting on my early literacy roots became an unexpected emotional experience, and a challenging personal, professional journey. While exploring memories about books and reading during my development from birth through elementary school, and those family relationships which nurtured my literacy development, I rediscovered important values and personal foundation which help define who I am. I also gained a better understanding of how these early reading events affect my professional work as a literacy educator.

My original thought was to explore some current professional references on the evolving literacy process, select a number of suggestions which were being made to encourage families to enhance literacy, and examine my family history as it related to these suggestions. I first skimmed through Morrow's (1995) *Family Literacy: Connections in Schools and Communities*, and found typical parental activities such as read to my child, told stories together, visited the library, read my own book, visited the bookstore, and discussed what we watched on TV. I was doing fine until I realized that we didn't have television until I was in the sixth grade.

While examining Braunger and Lewis' (1997) *Building a Knowledge Base in Reading*, I thought I might use their thirteen core understandings about learning to read as a springboard to examples from my life which encouraged my literacy development. These core understandings include:

1. Reading is a construction of meaning from written text. It is an active, cognitive, and affective process.

2. Background knowledge and prior experience are critical to the reading process.

3. Social interaction is essential in learning to read.

4. Reading and writing develop together.

5. Reading involves complex thinking.

6. Environments rich in literacy experiences resources and models facilitate reading development.

7. Engagement in the reading task is the key in successfully learning to read.

8. Children's understandings of print are not the same as adult's understandings.

9. Children develop phonemic awareness and knowledge of phonics through a variety of literacy opportunities, model, and demonstrations.

10. Children learn successful reading strategies in the context of real reading.

11. Children learn best when teachers employ a variety of strategies to model and demonstrate reading knowledge, strategy, and skills.

12. Children need the opportunity to read, read, read.

13. Monitoring the development of reading processes is vital to student success. (p. 5)

While starting to explore this option, I became frustrated because my memory was not as systematic, full, or helpful as I had hoped, during these early years. However, I remembered warm close interactions with all my grandparents and our reading of many books. My parents always supported my reading development by providing me with a wide variety of books. I realized that I still had many of these books and a few had been saved by my parents. I have included a listing of these books from my early literacy roots, and these will be the springboard for some thoughts and memories which link my personal literacy journey to a few of the literacy concepts and suggestions listed previously.

My parents were raised in rural Kansas and Missouri. So, through the lives of my grandparents and relatives, I was blessed with the opportunity to know both farm life and the sense of community which exists in small towns. I was born in Chicago in 1943 and lived there until my parents moved back to Wichita, Kansas when I started the second grade. We lived there through my elementary school years.

Books were always valued in my extended family. My grandmother's 1862 *The Country Picture Book for Boys and Girls* was illustrated beautifully with shortened sentences and a somewhat controlled vocabulary. It was prized by my mother when she was a girl, as was her 1909 copy of *The Story of Jesus Told for Little Children in Words of One Syllable*. Grandma, so the story goes, taught for a time in a one-room school house though she did not have the opportunity to go to high school. My father recalled that he was 4 or 5 years old when grandma read him *The Adventures of Brownie Bear*. Grandma read me that book too. Another important and now well-worn book was Moore's *The Night Before Christmas* with its animated pages. I always received a number of books for Christmas and birthdays during these early years, especially from my great-grandmother.

My parents and grandparents all valued education and learning. Every generation wanted the next one to do well, to move ahead, to do better than they did. Quiet dedication and hard work were what would get you ahead in life. Wasn't it the Little Engine that said, "I think I can...I think I can."? Our family read magazines, books, and

newspapers for pleasure and interest, as well as to learn. Many of my early books reveal the influence of Walt Disney. Disney books were read carefully, and it wasn't long before the movies were out—Bambi, Pinocchio, Johnny Appleseed, Uncle Remus and Donald Duck cartoons. I read comic books, *Boy's Life*, *Life* magazine and the series of books including stories about: Daniel Boone, Albert Schweitzer, Davy Crockett, George Washington Carver, Valley Forge, Dickens' stories, Sam Houston, Robert Fulton, the Barbary Pirates, and *Thirty Seconds Over Tokyo*.

As far as my own reading ability goes I found some old report cards from kindergarten and first grade. I was "good" but never "excellent" in my reading and spelling. When I checked my literacy grades in second grade, I found that I moved from 2's and 3's (average) in the first quarter, to straight 1's (the best) for the rest of the year. Perhaps the new glasses which showed up on my face in my old pictures at that time had something to do with that.

This journey into my personal early literacy roots prompted very special conversations with my father, and memories of extended family which have been defining influences in my personal, family and professional life. Reading, especially books, was a useful tool for many purposes including learning, work, pleasure, adventure, and for reinforcing warm and caring personal relationships and conversations. Poetry and music and the play of language got their start here in my life. Much of the base for what Braunger and Lewis (1997) say is necessary for literacy existed in my family and fed my early literacy roots. Learning, reading and growing were all valued in my early years and I thank my parents and grandparents for that early nourishment.

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Ken Smith's Early Literacy Roots

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Reaction to "Looking For Our Literacy Roots in All the Right Places"

Eunice N. Askov

The session consisted on a retrospective of the "literacy roots" of the presenters. Most began with descriptions of early reading experiences with parents or grandparents. However, the culminating memory for all presenters was entering the schooling process in the first grade. Most remembered, with great fondness, their first grade teachers as well as older female classmates who helped them out along their literacy journeys.

Wayne Otto's top ten list of literacy events, #10 being his Little Sears Desk to the culmination of his daughter as a literacy event, and Tom Cloer's beautifully written description of learning English as a Second Language (Appalachian being his first language like his grandmother's) were especially memorable. Tom's image of his good-smelling and gentle first-grade teacher was particularly vivid as a positive initial school experience.

Oral history research, however, requires an analysis of themes that emerge. The predominant theme seemed to be that literacy acquisition was an engaging and fulfilling process filled with pleasant and positive emotions. Learning to read was accompanied by learning to write; the two processes seemed to be inextricably linked. No one even mentioned that phonics might have played a role in learning the decoding process. The presenters all focused on learning to read through engagement in the process by reading favorite books or book series.

Oral history research also usually involves triangulation of the data. Although we have no way to check the accuracy of the presen-

ters' recollections, the process of triangulation occurred quite unexpectedly. Both Rick Erickson and Bernie Hayes reported at some length about the impact of John R. Tunis, author of a sports series for adolescent readers, on their development as readers. They both reported learning to read by reading that series. (I must confess that I had never heard of Tunis; I was waiting to hear about dog and horse books!)

The participants at the session were eager to share their own recollections of early reading experiences. My own literacy memories included my father's "lap reading" the comics to me every evening as well as the mounds of newspapers and magazines discarded on the floor next to my parents' chairs in the living room. I also remember an early discussion with my father about the nature of reading. I told him that he could not really be reading the books he had piled up because he was turning the pages too fast! (He was working on his doctoral dissertation at the time!) He explained that he didn't have to read every word or even an entire page since he already knew a lot about the subject. That was a new concept to me as a young reader!

Roots usually suggest an anchor that holds a tree in one place. However, these literacy recollections suggest the roots of the mangrove tree that allow the tree to move according to forces in the environment. (Mangrove trees "travel" to find better light, water, etc.) Nevertheless, the roots still do anchor the tree in the ground and provide stability as it grows. These literacy roots, like the roots of the mangrove tree, represented the literacy events along the personal journeys and growth throughout life.

All the speakers were middle-aged. One must speculate about the literacy roots that are being cultivated in today's children. Are they, in fact, being nourished? Will they allow for future literacy growth? The participants seemed less optimistic about the literacy roots of the current generation that are being nourished with television and computers. As reading teachers, we are left with the charge to encourage literacy experiences even within these hostile environments.

Seeking Agreement in Literacy Beliefs

Mona W. Matthews, Laurie Elish-Piper, Jerry L. Johns, Victoria J. Risko

Currently, reading instruction is receiving much media attention and scrutiny. Legislation at the federal level (America Reads Challenge) and in many states (e.g., California, Texas, Ohio) demonstrates the high degree of concern about how reading is taught. While many literacy educators traditionally have discussed their beliefs, practices, and philosophies about reading, recently, such discussions have taken on new meaning and urgency. Some maintain that we must step forward and articulate what is known and what beliefs reading educators hold in common. In short, Flippo (1997) asserts, "educators...must take charge of their instructional lives" (p. 303).

Purpose and Procedures

Given the amount of discussion about how reading should be taught, we organized a problems courts session at the annual meeting of the American Reading Forum to determine the degree of agreement among literacy educators about literacy development and instruction. Twenty-three participants, including the four session organizers, were present during the session. All 23 were either teacher educators or graduate students studying literacy.

Prior to the session, each organizer generated statements he or she believed represented critical aspects of literacy development and instruction. Each generated the list based on his or her experience as a literacy teacher educator. All four view literacy from a balanced perspective wherein skills and strategies are taught within meaningful contexts (e.g., Matthews, Johns, Risko, & Tonjes, 1997; Pearson, 1996;

Strickland, 1996). Further, all believe reading is a constructive process (Dole, Duffy, Roehler, & Pearson, 1991) with considerations given to the affective, social, cultural, and cognitive influences on literacy development (Matthews, et al.). The organizers' lists were combined and revised to increase clarity and eliminate redundancy. The final list contained 20 statements which were organized in four categories: Nature of Literacy, Instructional Approaches and Methods, Sociocultural Aspects of Literacy, and Qualities / Characteristics / Dimensions of Effective Literacy Teachers and Environments. See Appendix for a list of the statements.

A technique utilized by one of the presenters in his college classes was used to determine the degree to which the participants agreed with the 20 statements. This process was selected because it is effective in eliciting simultaneous feedback from all group members. Each participant was given three index cards: one red, one yellow, and one green. Then, as each statement was read, the participants were instructed to hold up the green card if they agreed with the statement, a yellow card if they generally agreed with the statement but had some questions or concerns, and a red card if they substantially disagreed with the statement. After reading all of the statements in a category, the participants discussed the statements that had three or more red and/or yellow cards displayed. To clarify the areas of disagreement, the limited session time was spent discussing statements where disagreement or confusion existed.

Data Analysis and Results

The participants' responses to the 20 statements were counted and sorted into three categories: Agreement (those statements which had all green or no more than one red and/or yellow displayed), Mostly Agreed (those which only had two red and/or yellow cards displayed) and Some to Much Disagreement (those which had three or more red and/or yellow cards displayed). Table 1 summarizes the results.

Table 1

Summary of Participants' Responses to Literacy Statements

Category	Agree	Mostly Agree	Some to Much Disagreement
Nature of Literacy	Statement 5	Statements 1, 3	Statements 2, 4
Instructional Approaches & Methods		Statements 6, 8, 9, 10, 11	Statement 7
Sociocultural Aspects	Statements 14, 15	Statement 12	Statement 13
Effective Literacy Teachers & Environments	Statement 16	Statements 17, 18	Statements 19, 20

Note: Agree = all green cards or mostly green with no more than one red and/or yellow card displayed. Mostly Agree = two red and/or yellow cards displayed. Some to Much Disagreement = three or more red and/or yellow cards displayed.

Results indicated that the participants agreed or mostly agreed with 14 of the statements, and they demonstrated some to much disagreement with 6 of the statements. The participants "agreed" with the statements that relate to the strategic nature of reading (statement 5), and the importance of building on children's language, experiences, and social interactions (statement 14). They also agreed that teachers should build on what children bring with them to school (statement 15), and the dynamic nature of literacy learning environments (statement 16). Each of these statements relates to the philosophical or conceptual understandings of literacy rather than specific methods or techniques used to teach reading.

The participants "mostly agreed" with ten of the statements. The focus of these statements ranged from those relating to broad conceptual ideas about reading development (statements 1, 3, & 12) to those relating to specific goals and approaches to reading instruction (6, 8, 9, 10, 11, 17, 18).

The participants "disagreed" with six of the twenty statements. The reasons the participants gave for their disagreement with five of the six statements are summarized below. Time ended before the sixth statement could be discussed.

Nature of Literacy

Reading is a multi-dimensional process and instruction should account for all of these dimensions (Statement 2). Generally, the group agreed that reading is a complex interrelated process, but concerns were raised about terms used in the statement. *Multi-dimensional* was considered too broad and vague. Some suggested agreement might be reached if the dimensions were specified. For others, the term *account* was problematic because for them it evoked negative images of teacher accountability for student learning.

Students must believe they are readers (i.e., see themselves as readers) in order to become readers (Statement 4). Questions were raised during the group's discussion of this statement. "When is one considered a reader?" "What if one has the ability to read but does not read—would that person be considered a reader?" Participants cited research that suggests reading programs which focus primarily on affective aspects of literacy are not sufficient for developing effective readers (Stahl, Suttles, & Pagnucco, 1996). Moreover, this same research, they maintained, suggests that students within these classrooms may have inaccurate perceptions of themselves as readers. For example, Stahl et al. found that some students in whole language classrooms thought they were the best readers in their class when in fact they would have been considered struggling readers in different contexts. Perhaps, as some participants suggested, it is more important for students to believe they have the capacity to become an effective reader than for them to believe they are effective readers. To reflect this shift, one participant suggested an alternative *wording (Students must believe they can become readers)* for future presentations of the statements.

Instructional Approaches and Methods

Instruction for low-achieving readers should be based on principles of acceleration, not remediation (Statement 7). Many participants were unclear about the intended meaning of the word *acceleration* and some stated that the word *remediation* was politically incorrect. The originator of this statement explained that *acceleration* is used by Allington (1995) to describe an alternative to the remediation approach which traditionally has guided teachers' work with low-achieving readers. One participant suggested that perhaps Goodman's (1996) views on revaluing the reader would be a more appropriate stance to take. Still others expressed concerns about the growing challenge teachers face with meeting the diverse needs of the children within their classrooms

Sociocultural Aspects of Literacy

Good literacy instruction bridges the literacy practices of the classroom and the literacy practices of the community/home (Statement 13). Several participants were unclear about the intended meaning of the word *bridges*. Did it mean that instruction should move back and forth from the home/community to the school contexts? If so, some participants argued that certain homes did not provide literacy experiences and materials; therefore, a solid bridge could not be built "from nothing to something." Others responded that all families use literacy as documented by Taylor and Dorsey-Gaines (1988), and they asserted educators must seek to build bridges between home and school literacies regardless of the degree of similarity or dissimilarity between them.

Some participants were concerned that the statement suggests that teachers should shoulder the responsibility for literacy development. They maintained that the responsibility is shared with parents, other school personnel, the school system, state departments of education, and students.

Qualities/Characteristics/Dimensions of Effective Literacy Teachers and Environments

Effective teachers know when and why to sit back and follow students' leads. Effective teachers listen more than they talk (Statement 19). Several participants viewed these statements as idealistic and naive. Perhaps, it was suggested, a teacher could take the stance of follower if all students were marching successfully toward literacy. However, to take such a passive stance with most children, may in fact inhibit rather than enhance development. Furthermore, others maintained that some research (e.g., Stahl & Miller, 1989) supports the use of more teacher directed literacy instruction for students who are not proceeding as desired in literacy. Those who supported this statement suggested that to "follow students' leads" meant instruction should be planned on information gathered by "kidwatching" (Goodman, 1985), rather than a predefined curriculum.

Discussion

Generally, agreement was possible on 14 of the 20 statements. This finding, considering the diverse experiences of the group, suggests literacy professionals do share some understandings about what constitutes effective literacy development and instruction. However, the moderate to substantial disagreement with six of the twenty statements, also suggests that agreement is far from complete. In reviewing comments made by the participants, disagreement centered around several areas.

Although there appears to be agreement that the reading process is a complex interrelated one, it appears that the theoretical differences found in the professional literature existed among those present at this session. This was evident in some of the comments made during the discussions. For example, concerns expressed about Statement 13 — *Good literacy instruction bridges the literacy practices of the classroom and the literacy practices of the community/home* — implied that some homes do not provide experiences that are useful to classroom teachers, whereas, others argued that all homes offer useful experiences.

The terms used in the statements also stimulated discussion. For example several participants were unclear about the intended meaning of *acceleration, multi-dimensional,* and *account.* This suggest there is a need to define terms frequently used in descriptions of literacy development and instruction so we can better determine if disagreements are over philosophies or semantics.

Concerns were also expressed about the impact the statements might have on classroom teachers. For instance, some suggested that Statement 13 — *Good literacy instruction bridges the literacy practices of the classroom and the literacy practices of the community/homes* — implied that the responsibility for students' literacy development is with the teacher, when, it was asserted, this responsibility is shared.

Finally, the discussions also suggested a need to incorporate the voices of teachers in the generation of statements describing critical aspects of literacy development and instruction. For example, Statement 19 — *Effective teachers know when and why to sit back and follow students' leads. Effective teachers listen more than they talk* — was described by some as naive and idealistic. Involving teachers in the process may provide a "reality check" and better ensure that the statements reflect both the most current theory and the best instructional practice.

This varied range of areas where agreement was reached indicates that the group found a great deal of "common ground" regarding beliefs about literacy. The degree of this agreement is encouraging in the current climate of reading wars and on-going debates regarding how to teach reading. While this Problems Court exercise was not an extensive study of opinions regarding literacy, it does suggest that there is agreement among literacy professionals about the nature of the reading process and general views about how reading should be taught.

As challenging as it may be to reach agreement, we believe it is important to attempt, for if we do not, we leave it to others to articulate what we believe. When this occurs, the results are more often

political grandstanding rather than a reasoned assessment of what is known about how one emerges and develops as a reader. Stanovich (in press) maintains that there is much about which we can agree on about the reading process, and our pretense to the contrary leaves us vulnerable to attacks and intrusion from others outside our field. We hope that through conversations, such as the one described in this paper, we can transform our arguments into intellectual debates which recognize the understandings we have in common and acknowledge the power of multiple viewpoints, viewpoints which, this paper suggests, have many common underpinnings.

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Appendix

Statements of literacy beliefs

Nature of Literacy

1. Readers bring knowledge to the text about the world, the topic being read, and themselves as readers, and they use this knowledge to construct meaning from that text.

2. Reading is a multi-dimensional process, and instruction should account for all of these dimensions.

3. Literacy happens when students understand the purpose of literacy activities (and the skills and strategies that are embedded within these activities) as they relate to real-world literacy practices.

4. Students must believe they are readers (e.g., see themselves as readers) in order to become readers.

5. Effective readers are strategic; they can use a variety of strategies, cueing systems, and skills to construct meaning. Effective reading instruction develops and nurtures such strategic reading.

Instructional Approaches and Methods

6. Reading instruction should be designed to address the needs of the reader.

7. Instruction for low-achieving readers should be based on principles of acceleration not remediation.

8. Teachers should consider what conceptions of reading are being reinforced by the experiences they provide for their students and should ask themselves "What changes will occur in my students' understanding of reading as a result of the year they spend in my classroom?"

9. Phonics is not a method or approach; rather, it is one of several strategies students can use to decode words.

10. Children learn to read and write in environments where they have opportunities to share text with others and where they have many opportunities to read and write, including unin-

terrupted and guided interactions with "real" or connected texts of multiple genres.

11. Literacy happens when multiple areas of development (e.g., both word recognition and comprehension, both invented spelling and phonemic awareness) are encouraged simultaneously.

Sociocultural aspects of literacy

12. The social contexts within which children learn to read and the social interactions within these contexts influence children's conceptions of reading as well as their comprehension of text.

13. Good literacy instruction bridges the literacy practices of the classroom and the literacy practices of the community/home.

14. Literacy builds on and continues to build on children's language, experiences, and social interactions.

15. Effective teachers build on the literacy knowledge, uses, and experiences students bring to school, including students from non-mainstream groups.

Qualities/ characteristics/ dimensions of effective literacy teachers and environments

16. Literacy learning happens best in dynamic learning environments in which multiple viewpoints are heard and respected, where teachers and students support each others' inquiry and learning, and where ideas are studied in depth and for varying purposes.

17. Literacy happens in classrooms where teachers and students share learning goals, and students are learning strategies that will help their independent learning and problem solving.

18. Literacy happens when teachers believe in their students' capabilities and view every student as a reader and writer.

19. Effective teachers know when and why to sit back and follow students' leads. Effective teachers listen more than they talk.

20. Teachers who love reading foster that same love of reading in students.

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American Reading Forum
Membership Information

The American Reading Forum:

The American Reading Forum is a nonprofit, professional organization composed of individuals who share an interest in the improvement of reading. While the American Reading Forum is an organization that facilitates the dissemination of ideas and research, it places highest priority on providing its members opportunities for a critical discussion of ideas, issues, research, and paradigms.

The American Reading Forum's Goals:

The American Reading Forum declares the following to be its reason for existence and the guidelines for its activities:

- To provide a true forum for reading education where new research can be generated, research in progress can be refined, completed research can be reported, and reported research can be evaluated.
- To provide for the translation of reading research, theory, and philosophical deliberations into sound practice, but with no research, discussion, or contemplation to be discarded because its implementation is not immediately apparent.
- To conduct a conference at which newly trained scholars and scholars in training can get to know and get assistance from established and distinguished scholars in the field, through a mutual exchange of ideas.
- To provide a yearbook through which scholars of all levels can share viewpoints, resources, and expertise.
- To ensure that in the field of reading no idea is too bold or new to be given a hearing, and none too old to be given reconsideration.

The American Reading Forum's Meeting:

To achieve its goals, ARF sponsors a meeting each year during early December. The program consists of the common conference session formats (e.g., paper sessions, major addresses, and symposia), as well as alternative formats to those generally employed by organizations in the field of reading. To enhance the opportunity for participants' interaction, the American Reading Forum encourages a variety of formats for its sessions. A "Topical Issues Forum," a "Continuous Dialogue Session," and "Mentorship Sessions" are a few of the formats that ARF considers as ways to allow issues and topics to be discussed in depth by those who attend the annual meeting.

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Membership Form

Annual Membership in the American Reading Forum begins in December of the year in which your application is received. All memberships include the annual YEARBOOK, which is received the following December.

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I verify that this applicant is a full-time student.

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Faculty Member's Signature Name of Institution

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